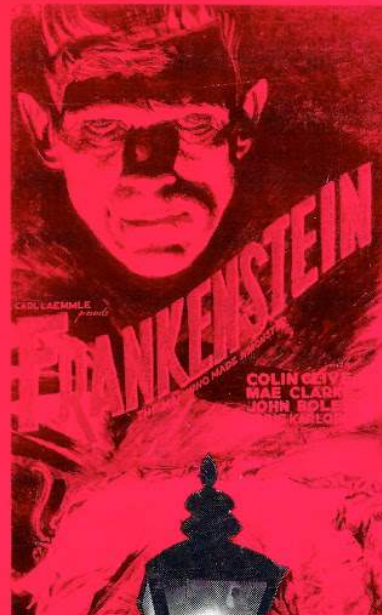
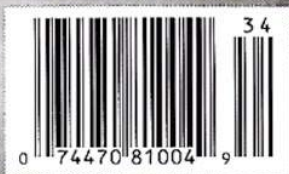
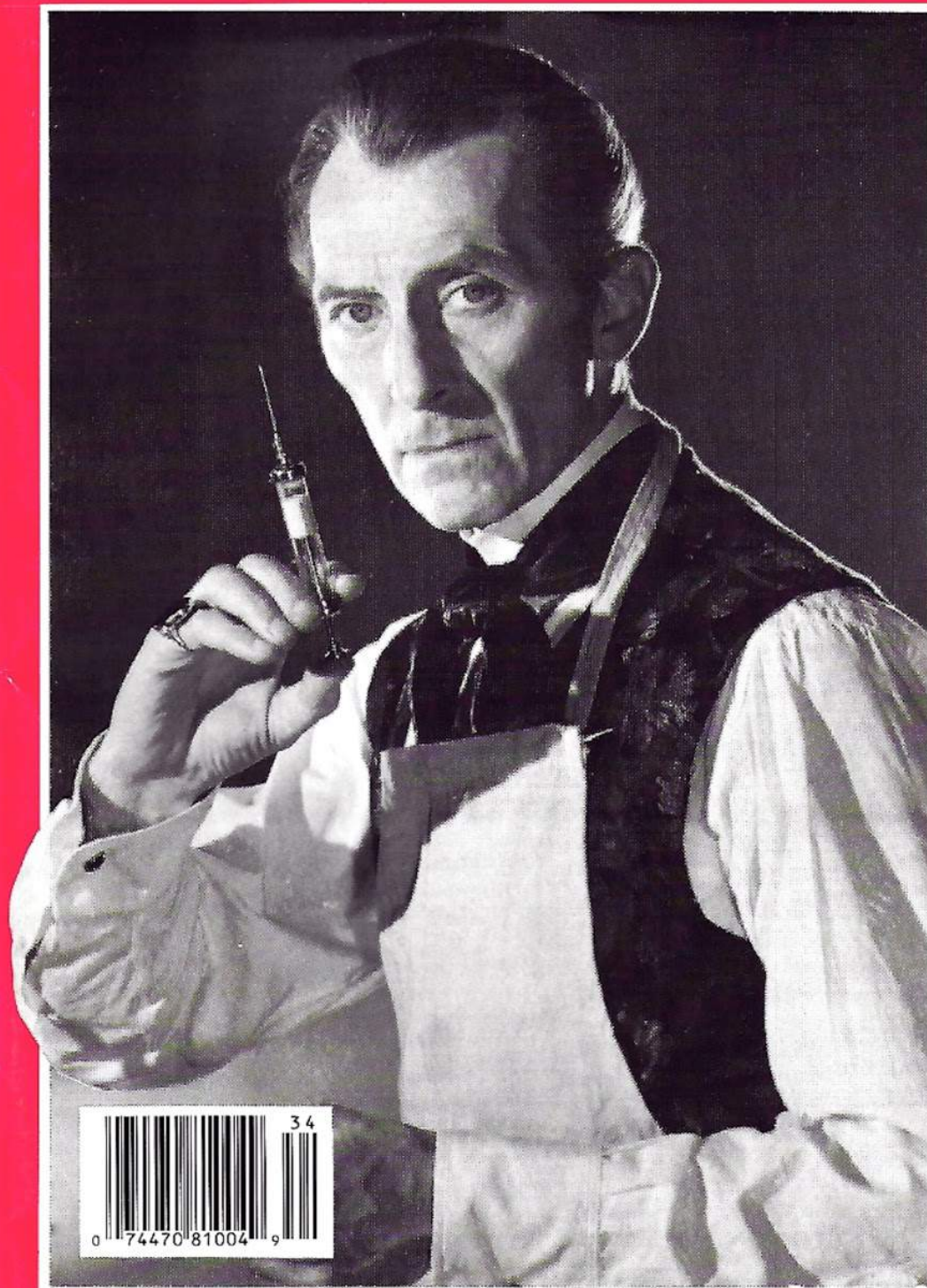


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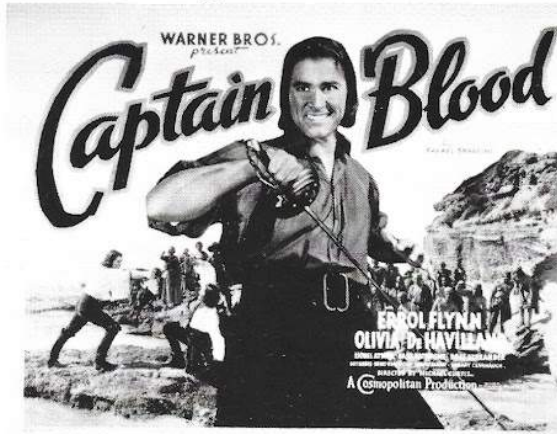


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Jessie Lilley  
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Richard Valley

**COPY EDITOR**  
Sally Jane Gellert  
**ASSOCIATE EDITOR**  
Thomas J. Amorosi

**ART DIRECTOR**  
John E. Payne

**ADVERTISING DIRECTOR**  
Jill Clarvit (201) 947-6241

**PUBLIC RELATIONS DIRECTOR**  
Buddy Scalera (201) 265-5475

#### CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Bill Amazzini, John Brunas, Michael Brunas, David Stuart Davies, Deborah Del Vecchio, Sean Farrell, Sally Jane Gellert, Bruce G. Hallenbeck, Jim Knüsch, John J. Mathews, Bill Palmer, Bennet Pomerantz, Steve Randisi, Paul Robb, Marcy Robin, Scot D. Ryersson, Buddy Scalera, Ken Schactman, Richard Scrivani, Kevin G. Shinnick, Drew Sullivan, Susan Svehla, Michael R. Thomas, Richard Valley, Michael Orlando Yaccarino

**CONTRIBUTING ARTIST**  
Mary Payne

**EDITORIAL ASSISTANTS**  
Corinne M. Bazzani & Melissa Getzoff

**EDITORIAL SECRETARY**  
Elinor Bernstein

**RESEARCH CONSULTANTS**  
John Brunas & Michael Brunas  
Kevin G. Shinnick & Tom Weaver

**PRINTED BY**  
Ripon Community Printers  
Ripon, WI



#### SPECIAL THANKS

Jennie Barnett, Thomas Beck, Gary Bradbury, J.M. Broughton, Nathan Hassan, Dick Klemensen, Jim Pierson, Martha Thomases, Rochelle Wilder



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#### COVER PHOTOS:

*Peter Cushing in FRANKENSTEIN MUST BE DESTROYED (1970);  
Joan Bennett and Dan Duryea in SCARLET STREET (1945)*



# Scarlet Letters



My praise and enthusiasm extend to you and your staff for a job well done in keeping the cinematic legend of shock and schlock alive. Long an admirer of good old-fashioned B-movie horror, I always worry that these endeavors will be buried and forgotten along with the remains of every Dracula who ever crossed the screen. What a treat to see that you have not only nurtured and disinterred all of the killer tomatoes, wasp women, killer bees, voodoo queens, homicidal slashers, howling wolf men, alien creatures, moon monsters, alligator people, and two-headed transplants, but also honored the actors who played them. Everything about your magazine appeals to the perverse lust for lunacy in me. Congratulations on a job well done.

Rex Reed  
New York, NY

Gosh! Wow! Boy, oh boy!—as I first exclaimed in print in 1929 at age 12. Sixty-four years later, at 76, *Scarlet Street* #8 inspires me to repeat. With this special Dracular issue you've taken a quantum jump into the lead among imagi-movie magazines. Kong-size congratulations!

Forrest J Ackerman  
Lugos Angeles  
Horrorwood, Karloffornia  
*We never tire of hearing from our Forry Friend.*

Congratulations are twofold in this letter, along with the ubiquitous thank you for another fine issue in *Scarlet Street* #8. The congratulations are for the Fanex Award mentioned in the FRANKLY SCARLET column and for the editorial jurisprudence exhibited in the publication of Michael Mallory's masterly FRANKENSTEIN AND DRACULA MEET THE CRITICS.

Mr. Mallory reiterated points I have held for a long time but rarely expressed (except to a very accommodating but disinterested spouse) regarding the performances of Messrs. Lugosi and Chaney in FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE WOLF MAN and SON OF DRACULA (both 1943). His insights into Lon's underplaying bring to mind another, lesser film the actor made several years later.

In 1956's INDESTRUCTIBLE MAN (no "THE," purists), Lon, as Butcher Benton, is revived after execution to mete out death to his betrayers. Although rendered mute by the

electrochemical process, Mr. Chaney does have one speaking scene early on, as he swears revenge on his former cronies.

Here, as when he played Count Alucard, an aura of quiet menace seeps through the dialogue. He is behind bars as he makes his promise, yet there is real tension in the scene, and a feeling that the character is fully capable of exacting that retribution. It's too bad the rest of the film, already derivative, degenerates into a flat, monster-on-the-loose shocker, what with this promising start.

In all, a fine re-appraisal by Mr. Mallory; overall, a terrific issue of *Scarlet Street*. With confidence, I look forward to many more.

David H. Smith  
Oakland Park, FL

What a wonderful surprise it was to open my first issues of *Scarlet Street* and find interviews with Jack Larson [*Scarlet Street* #5] and Noel Neill [*Scarlet Street* #6], two of my favorite TV stars from my all-time favorite TV show, THE ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN. Both are gracious

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and warm personalities. Their contribution to the Superman mythos is important and lasting.

Congratulations on your recent Fanex Award. It was richly earned and richly deserved. Kudos to everyone for a wonderful magazine!

I am a 33-year-old entertainer at Walt Disney World and a child of Forrest Ackerman and *Famous Monsters*. Reading *Scarlet Street* brings back that same exhilarating thrill that those long ago days of *FM* brought me, but on a more sophisticated level.

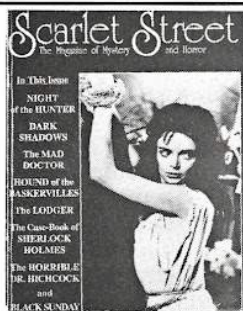
I have especially enjoyed your interviews with those wonderful Grand Masters of Fantasy and Wonder, Christopher Lee, Peter Cushing, and Vincent Price. These three are my favorite living actors. Also, my roommate and I consider Jeremy Brett the Sherlock Holmes of the 20th century (or is it the 19th?). My roommate is an immense fan of the current Granada films and sends his congrats on your superb coverage of this series.

I do have a question. Are there any Old Mother Riley fans out there? I have immensely enjoyed the films in the series that I have come across; many of them fall well into the domain of this magazine. (OLD MOTHER RILEY'S CIRCUS would have fit right in with *Scarlet Street* #6.) I know absolutely nothing about Arthur Lucan, the British music-hall artist who starred in the series. Would someone out there tackle this subject for me?

Allen Kretschmar  
Orlando, FL

Proving that, if life must be a drag, it can also be a lucrative one, British comic Arthur Lucan starred as Old Mother Riley, an Irish washerwoman, in a series of feature films made between 1937 and 1952. One of the last Old Mother Riley comedies is of particular interest to *Scarlet Readers*: It's 1952's OLD MOTHER RILEY MEETS THE VAMPIRE, released in the States as VAMPIRE OVER LONDON and starring the inimitable Bela Lugosi. The merry mailmen at the *Scarlet Street* Post Office will be happy to forward letters from Old

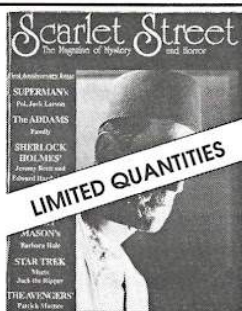




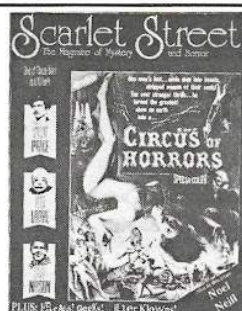
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No. 5: Barbara Hale, Patrick Macnee, Jack Larson, THE HOUSE THAT SCREAMED, Jeremy Brett, Edward Hardwicke, Christopher Lee, Universal vs. Hammer Films, David Suchet, THE SOLITARY CYCLIST, Narsisco Ibáñez Serrador.



No. 6: CIRCUS OF HORRORS, Noel Neill, David Nelson, THE MASTER BLACK-MAILER, VAMPIRE CIRCUS, George Baxt, Sidney Hayers, Erika Remberg, BATMAN, FREAKS, GORG, NIGHT-MARE ALLEY, STRANGERS ON A TRAIN, BERSERK!



No. 7: Vincent Price, John Moulder-Brown, Yvette Vickers, TOMB OF LIGEIA, THE SUSSEX VAMPIRE, Joan Hickson, BLUEBEARD, BATMAN RETURNS, Elizabeth Shepherd, HOUSE OF WAX, THE RAVEN, LAURA, INNOCENT BLOOD.

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*Mother maniacs to Allen. (Please include a stamped envelope with all mail to be forwarded.)*

Thanks so much for sending me a copy of *Scarlet Street*. It's truly a terrific magazine! I don't know how you managed to pack so much in one issue. If you can't find something you like in this publication, you might as well give up.

A really fine job.

Please be assured that I'm spreading the word about your publication, and thanks again.

Neal Barrett, Jr.

Author, *Pink Vodka Blues*

Fort Worth, TX

Issue #8, with its emphasis on those ever-enduring creatures of the night (vampires, of course), was wonderful. I'm glad someone has finally come to the defense of Lon Chaney in *SON OF DRACULA*. I think both Chaney and the film are superb, and always have. And isn't Gloria Holden (i.e., *DRACULA'S DAUGHTER*) the most glamorous vampire ever?

By the way, I was dismayed to find no mention of my winning the MYSTERY PHOTO contest in *Scarlet Street* #7.

Fredric Cooper

Torrance, CA

*Oops! Fredric was, indeed, the winner of the MYSTERY PHOTO contest in Scarlet Street #7. He quickly and correctly identified Tod Browning's FREAKS (1934). Sorry we didn't mention it before.*

I thoroughly enjoyed Kevin Shinnick's enlightening interview with John Landis. With your indulgence, I'd like to delve further into the briefly-touched-upon freedom-of-expression aspect.

Let me preface this by saying that no one is more opposed to all forms of censorship than I. I'm repulsed by any attempt to curtail people's free choice, especially by means of legislation. I believe in education rather than legislation: if you dislike something you see, feel free to tell everybody your opinion, just don't pass another bloody damned law against something. Protests, of course, being a form of free expression, are an acceptable means of showing disapproval. It's when they get violent, or call for violence, that they go too far.

And that's my point: going too far. While some people believe freedom is an absolute, I'm convinced that the very granting of these freedoms creates an obligation not to abuse them, and to moderate the desire for total freedom (anarchy?) with a little common sense and responsibility. Yes, it is possible to go too far.

Where do you draw the line? What constitutes abuse of freedom? When someone gets hurt, physically or otherwise, who doesn't deserve it, when printing an unsubstantiated story can ruin someone's life; when making a provocative public statement can cause a riot and get innocent people killed; when broadcasting a report with one-sided statistics or misleading video can blind the public to the truth and deny them the right to make their own decision; when recording a song urging people to do violence to another group of people can get someone killed.

Why was it okay for Eric Clapton to sing "I Shot the Sheriff?" Because it was a pointless little backwoods fairy tale of a song, with no message intended. It was about as meaningful as Burt Reynolds' GATOR films.

Why was it okay for Arnold to kill 17 cops in *TERMINATOR*? Not because he was a white Republican (and what a bigoted statement that was!). Pay attention now, Mr. Landis: It wasn't okay, but he did it because he was a politically unaffiliated, raceless robot programmed to kill anyone in his way. . . it was a fictional movie, and he was the bad guy!

Now, then, why can't Ice T sing "Cop Killer?"

*Continued on page 10*

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# Frankly Scarlet



It's a Red-Letter Day! This issue of *Scarlet Street: The Magazine of Mystery and Horror* marks our second anniversary and, the rare prophet of doom to the contrary, we're still going strong. We're printing 20 times the number of copies of our first issue. What's more, we're selling them! (In other words, profits are up and prophets are down.) We've won awards. We've interviewed such stellar lights in our cinema sky as Vincent Price, Peter Cushing, Christopher Lee, Barbara Hale, Jack Larson, Noel Neill, Patrick Macnee, Jeremy Brett, Edward Hardwicke, Yvette Vickers, Richard Denning, David Nelson, Danny DeVito, Forrest J Ackerman, Thomas Beck, George Baxt, Zacherley, David Suchet, Joan Hickson, John Moulder-Brown, Elizabeth Shepherd, Veronica Carlson, John Landis, Rosalie Williams, Rebecca Eaton, Carlos Rivas, and Jeremy Paul. We've sat down and shared a drink or a dinner with upcoming interviewees Robert Quarry, Acquafredda, Russ Tamblyn, Ray Harryhausen, Ingrid Pitt, and Jim Danforth. We've lined up Diana Rigg, Beverly Garland, Tommy Kirk, Tim Considine, Ruth Hussey, Robert Clarke, Barbara Shelley, Paul Williams, Ian Ogilvy, Susanna Foster, Ray Stricklyn, Tony Randall, John Neville, Nicholas Meyer, Norma Eberhardt, Adrienne Corri, Michael Ripper, Samuel Z. Arkoff, Johnny Sheffield, Charles Band, Gayle Hunnicutt, Val Guest, Freddie Francis, Aron Kincaid, Kevin Conroy, Bob Hastings, Trevor Bowen, and Loren Lester. And we've got a few surprises in store that we're not quite ready to spring on you yet!

Interviews are only half the *Scarlet Street* story, though. In addition to printing the beguiling reminiscences and unexpurgated opinions of our celebrated subjects, we've got some of the best writers in Fear Fandom right here in these pages. Joining magnificent mainstays John and Michael Brunas (co-authors with Tom Weaver of *Universal Horrors*), Kevin G. Shinnick, Scot D. Ryerson, Michael Orlando Yaccarino, Sean Farrell, Scarlett O'Horrer, Bill Amazzini, Ken Schactman, Drew Sullivan, and the howling News Hound in the past two years—not to mention in the present issue—have been such scintillating scribes as David Stuart

Davies (author of *The Tangled Skein*), Bruce G. Hallenbeck (contributor to *Fangoria* and *Cinefantastique*), Michael Mallory (contributor to *Starlog* and *Comic Scene*), Deborah Del Vecchio and Tom Johnson (co-authors of *Peter Cushing: The Gentle Man of Horror*), Susan Svehla (*Midnight Marquee's* assistant editor), Jim Knüsch (editorial assistant to Dennis Daniel on *Famous Monsters Chronicles*), Marcy Robin (*Shadowgram's* editor), Steve Randisi (contributor to *Classic Images* and *World of Yesterday*), and the always opinionated Mr. Tom Weaver himself. Richard Scrivani, who dons top hat and tails this ish for a night at the opera with Charlie Chan, has become a valued regular. Gregory William Mank (author of *The Hollywood Hissables*) checks in next issue with a fascinating piece on Karloff and Lugosi. Filmmakers Ted Bohus and Fred Olen Ray and *Little Shoppe of Horror's* Dick Klemensen have offered priceless assistance. (Knowing it was priceless, we didn't offer them anything.) Heck, we've even had a few neologisms from Forry Ackerman, whose *Famous Monsters of Film* inspired every mad mag that followed!

While I'm passing out the praise, let's not forget John and Mary Payne, whose artful artwork has graced our pages since issue one. And speaking of art—comic-book art, that is—*Scarlet Street's* COMIC CORNER has been opened for business by Buddy Scalera.

Sally Jane Gellert's PARTING SHOT has become a *Scarlet Street* fave. Jill Clarvit's skills as advertising director have dazzled clients from coast to coast. Editorial assistant Corinne M. Bazzani and secretary Elinor Bernstein have toiled faithfully with computerized quill and foolscap. And Thomas J. Amorosi has done a bang-up job whipping our letters page into shape. (Let's have a little more mail, *Scarlet Readers*, or we'll set Tom to work whipping you!)

Who else can I tout? If you like your sensory pleasures—how shall I put it?—in your ears, then by all means tune in Bennett Pomerantz, whose column, VOICES OF DOOM, covers mystery and horror in the burgeoning audiobook field. (Bennett writes regularly for *Strange New Worlds*.) Elsewhere in this issue, *P. I. Magazine's* Bill Palmer intercepts sound waves from the past for MURDER BY RADIO.

Stick around, *Scarlet Readers*. As Beauty said when she found herself alone on her wedding night: The Beast is yet to come!

\*\*\*

Those of you who tuned in Superstation WOR last November 24th got a chance to see Jessie Lilley, our very own Madame Publisher, ply our wares on THE JOE FRANKLIN SHOW. Jessie was intro-

duced by talk-show veteran Joe as the publisher of *Scarlet Street* and proceeded to show a few pix from such flicks as BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN and HORROR OF DRACULA, and tell a few tales out of school. (Like Blanche DuBois, Jessie is no longer allowed in school, and probably for the same reason.) Unfortunately, though she had been introduced as the magazine's publisher, there flashed on the TV screen in the general vicinity of her bosom the legend "Jessie Lilley: Editor of *Scarlet Street*." Now, far be it for me to scream the true identity of *Scarlet Street's* multitasking editor to the world—ME! IT'S ME! I'M THE EDITOR! ME, ME, ME!—but there is such a thing as giving credit where credit is due. I mean, some of us may be a tad reticent when it comes to tooting our own horns—LIKE ME, FOR INSTANCE! ME, THE EDITOR!—but that's no reason to slap a mute on us. Incidentally, since taping THE JOE FRANKLIN SHOW, Madame Publisher has disappeared—literally vanished without a trace, during a period for which I have an airtight alibi. It's a pity, really: Jessie's been invited by Mr. Franklin to put in another appearance on his show, but I'm afraid the next time we get word of the ol' girl will be on a segment of UNSOLVED MYSTERIES.

\*\*\*

We were so busy lavishing praise on David Stuart Davies' *The Tangled Skein* last issue that we inadvertently left out some hot info: namely, where eager Holmesians can buy said book. It's available from Theme Publications, 43 Bowlease Coveaway, Weymouth, Dorset DT3 6PL, UK. The price is £25, plus £2 postage for Europe, £4 for Zone 1 (USA, Canada), and £5 for Zone 2 (Australia and Japan).

\*\*\*

Anyway, I hope all you *Scarlet Readers* out there enjoy this issue's lineup. Drop by next spring for *Scarlet Street's* heartwarming Mother's Day Special, featuring PSYCHO, THE UNINVITED, WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH HELEN?, and VILLAGE OF THE DAMNED. As Bette Davis croaked so memorably in ALL ABOUT EVE: "I adore cheap sentiment!"

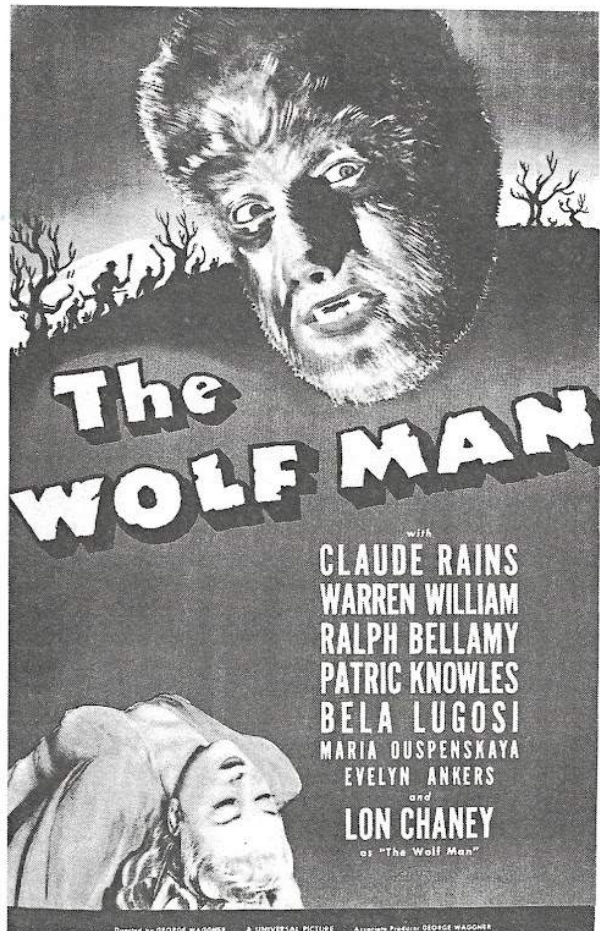
*Richard Valley*

P.S. As we went to press, a note in a beer bottle was found floating off the Jersey shore. It acknowledges yours truly as the one and only editor-in-chief of *Scarlet Street: The Magazine of Mystery and Horror*. Welcome, back, Jess! (Boy, I wonder if Forry Ackerman ever had this problem. . .)



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but the artist, be he Twain or T, has every right to express it, regardless of how it might be interpreted or acted upon.

That's how movies like *MARS NEEDS WOMEN* get made.

I picked up *Scarlet Street* #7 the other day and I'm amazed that you could pack so many pages into a \$4.95 publication, and do so with so many recognizable authors. Your range and variety of subject matter also impressed me, as it continues to knock me out how many new magazines this market seems capable of supporting (or at least tolerating).

I must take exception, however, to Michael Brunas and Tom Weaver's attempt to skin Edgar Ulmer's 1944 film, *BLUEBEARD*, of its reputation, though their quarrel as to its entertainment value may be inarguable. Their disregard for the auteur fashion which gave Ulmer his renewed critical estimation was evident, although I don't think they articulated the kind of understanding of this school of thought that such a denunciation would require.

As I understand it, one of the main points of auteurism is that some directors were able to take what, in others' hands, would have turned out to be purely hack work and apply their own unique stamp to it—either visually, in the variety of angles and camera setups, or thematically. This latter "monogram" (if you'll excuse the

pun) is usually inscribed by the director's personal identification with certain elements of the scripts handed them, and their ability to amplify characters or situations according to this vision. The result is a continuous world view and a personal statement inconceivable in any other (major or "negligible") director's hands.

Already, the justifications for a *BLUEBEARD* are apparent. Ulmer, a self-perceived wallflower in the Hollywood community, is an obvious double for his own title character, an artist who cannot operate within his chosen sphere and so must take it underground, masquerading as a puppeteer—is there any better analogue for the film director?—on shows for us "children." The paintings he feels are his true works must be passed on pseudonymously; for the pre-auteur filmmaker, this suggests the invisibility or lack of appreciation of the director as artist by his public (for a similar allegory, see the Edward G. Robinson character in the film for which your journal is named) and the trial for which he's held accountable his subjection to the witless "witnesses" (or audience) and "judge" (or critics) trying to assign "blame" for his work.

Ulmer's position as expatriate Jew gives him further reason to identify with such a persecution fantasy, being doubly "alien" (as in the title character of his 1951 *MAN FROM PLANET X*) or outcast (like his luckless hero in 1945's *DETOUR*)

toiling under substandard conditions (or Poverty Row production limitations) for little or no reward. To take this away from him seems thoughtless at best and sadistic at worst. (Brunas and Weaver counter every positive comment with a negative, as if to keep the bothersome artist in his place.)

For all of this, however, I'm still not much of an Ulmer fan. I find his lamentations too self-pitying for comfort, and though he boasts of a higher nobility in his subtexts—"the distinction" of his pictures, as two *BLUEBEARD* characters point out, lying "in the background"—I seldom see it in his finished work. But this shouldn't block my appreciation of what he's saying; filmmaking isn't all technique and effects, and to reduce any director to these terms is to do as big a disservice to ourselves as to the filmmaker. Any critic should know this; I'm surprised that a pair with the credentials your writers have didn't serve this purpose a little better in their article. (Makes me wonder why they wrote it in the first place.)

Steven Johnson  
Cleveland Heights, OH

I must compliment you on an excellent job with your magazine. You're right on the money with the items you're covering, and over the last year, you have become the greatest movie mag on the newsstands!

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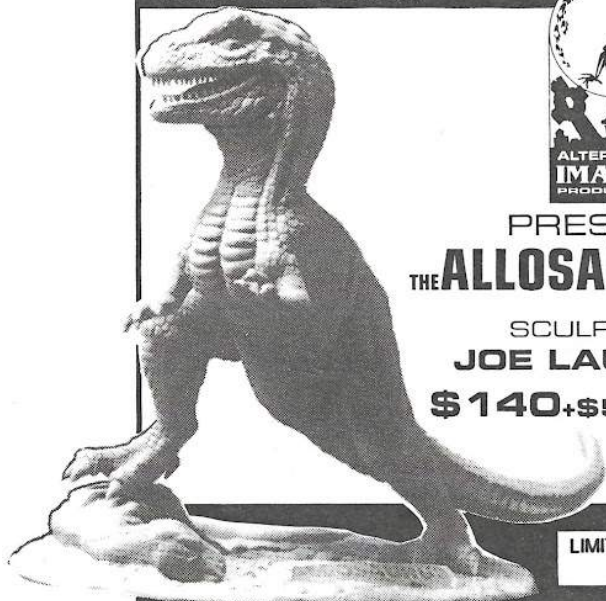
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I am writing to you on a matter that is very important to me. In your Summer issue, you made the announcement that Warner Home Video was releasing **FRANKENSTEIN MUST BE DESTROYED**, **DRACULA HAS RISEN FROM THE GRAVE**, and **TASTE THE BLOOD OF DRACULA**. As an enormous Hammer fan, I am more than elated! I read this back in July and had hoped they'd be out by October, but as we are dealing with Warner, no such luck. Knowing the way this company works, these titles probably won't be out 'til early next year.

I have written to Warner several times, but they responded with arrogant secrecy. I am wondering if you could send me any tidbit about these titles, for I am truly frustrated from waiting in the dark. These are three of my all-time favorite films and it really hurts when a true movie fan can't walk into the store and buy his favorite movies, especially when they are so widely popular.

Keep up the excellent work!

George Reis  
East Meadow, NY

Last summer, Warner Brothers issued a notice to video stores stating that the titles mentioned above had a street date of August 1992. After receiving your letter, we called Michael Finnegan's office at Warner Home Video. A message was relayed through one of Mr. Finne-

gan's assistants: "That's not a press release. That was information for video stores." Since it saw print, "those titles have bitten the dust" and are "no longer a part of that package." Nor will they be released "any time soon." In other words, George, Warner Home Video announced to retailers several titles whose release they wished to keep secret from consumers, just in case they changed their minds—which, sadly, they did. Sorry we got your hopes up, but at least you can check out the **FRANKENSTEIN MUST BE DESTROYED** piece on page 70.

☐

Your magazine is great, and I look forward to each and every issue.

Thank you so much for the article on my favorite actress, Yvette Vickers. What a beautiful and talented performer she is. I always felt that she was tremendously underrated as an actress, and under-utilized, too. I can't believe she's only made a dozen or so films. What were casting directors of the late 1950s and early 1960s thinking of? She was every bit as sexy as any of her contemporaries, and she could act! I'm surprised AIP didn't use her more in their films. Why was she given so many bit parts? Oh, well... at least we have her in **ATTACK OF THE FIFTY-FOOT WOMAN** (1958) and **ATTACK OF THE GIANT LEECHES** (1959), though her roles in both could have been bigger.

I'd like to know if Yvette has made any movies since **EVIL SPIRITS** in 1990 (another bit part, darn it!). Does she plan on continuing to search for roles, or will she be concentrating solely on the singing career you mentioned in the article? I, for one, would like to see Yvette get some really meaty character parts. Her small role in **EVIL SPIRIT** was very humorous and entertaining.

I am currently at work on a screenplay I hope to sell in the future. Its working title is **SWAMP TRASH VS. THE CARNIVAL MUTANTS**, and I have an important character in it that Yvette Vickers would be perfect for. If I'm able to get anywhere with it, I will do all I can to see that Yvette gets this part. (I think she would love it.)

I appreciate your magazine so much and share your belief in the talent of that special lady, Yvette Vickers.

Thank you and continued success.

John O'Dowd  
Pine Brook, NJ

To date, **EVIL SPIRITS** contains Yvette's most recent film appearance.

☐

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# BAT BEAT

**R**ecently released on video, *BATMAN RETURNS* (1992) is one of the most visionary and provocative fantasy films to emerge from the rusty Hollywood sausage machine in years. Its unique blend of multi-dimensional characters, extravagant production design, and darkly imaginative script results in a film experience not quickly forgotten. What is most amazing is the fact that director Tim Burton's peculiar genius—which combines comedy, violence, and downright weirdness—survived intact in a major theatrical release without being toned down by a cautious studio. Maybe it's this curious, often frightening, mix that has thrilled some viewers and turned others toward the safety of more palatable pastures.

It's an unwritten law that sequels rarely, if ever, live up to their predecessors, but *BATMAN RETURNS* actually improves on the original. Scripter Daniel Waters has created an entirely new universe in which superhuman heroes and villains battle claw and beak for control of Gotham City. Unlike the Joker and the little-missed Vicki Vale of the original, Penguin/Oswald Cobblepot and Catwoman/Selina Kyle aren't easily categorized in the typical comic-book notions of good and evil. Beneath the outlandish costumes, their villainy is the result of painfully recognizable human circumstances: those of a child who was never loved and a woman literally pushed too far. On a grander scale, this freakish fairy tale is a biting satire of many of late-20th-century society's many ills, trends, and controversial issues, among them child abuse, feminism, toxic waste, and political corruption.

An intriguing aspect of the script is its many allusions to the Bible, the operatic and mythological worlds of Wagner, and silent horror films. These references act as a counterpoint, often inverting their original meanings to comment on the action and characterizations.

Like Moses, the baby Penguin is found adrift in a basket and, as an adult, plans to free his city. Unlike the Biblical leader, the Penguin attempts to liberate his city through its own destruction. Barging through an underworld of dank sewers, the foul felon rides in an over-sized rubber ducky, giving the swan-boat of Wagner's *LOHENGRIN* a nasty twist. The Norse myths used as source material for many of the composer's librettos are filled with incidents of gods becoming human and vice versa. In *GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG*, the goddess Brünhilde, who has been deprived of her divinity, rides into the flames of a

funeral pyre to bring atonement for gods and men. In *BATMAN RETURNS*, Selina Kyle sacrifices one of her nine lives to rid the world of the loathsome Max Shreck with a million-volt kiss. Shreck's name is, of course, a nod to the great German silent film actor Max Schreck, star of F. W. Murnau's classic *NOSFERATU* (1922). This unscrupulous character metaphorically vampirizes Gotham by draining it, for his own ends, of its vital energy.



*Danny DeVito as the Penguin*

*BATMAN RETURNS* benefits greatly by the quality acting of its cast. Michael Keaton proves that less is more: Batman/Bruce Wayne has less screen time than in the original, but he leaves a lasting impression as the Dark Knight. Always a treat for genre fans, the impeccable Michael Gough offers a wonderfully droll performance as the dependable Alfred. Still, it's the villains who run the show.

Christopher Walken, coldly suave in 30s-style gangster suits and spats, is Max Shreck, the capitalist from hell. Walken gives an adroitly sardonic performance. Portraying two different aspects of the same woman, Michelle Pfeiffer is both heroine and kitten-with-a-whip. Danny DeVito's Penguin is unforgettable. The actor creates an indelible impression as this perversely delightful character.

The colossal sets designed by Bo Welch, with their contorted perspectives

and unnerving landscapes, recall Fritz Lang's *METROPOLIS* (1927) gone rancid with urban decay. The Penguin roosts in a massive, moldering lair below a derelict zoo. Selina Kyle's split personality is ironically represented by the deranged Barbie-doll decor of her apartment. All its layers of queasy, bubble-gum-pink paint cannot mask the cracks and sordidness continually rising from beneath.

Danny Elfman's brooding score, replete with ominous organ chords, helps define the characters on an emotional level. Selina's transformation into Catwoman is set against the uneasy strains of violins and staccato percussion. Interestingly, the composer chooses a Wagnerian theme of redemption as Penguin seemingly expires at the end of the film.

All of this is not to say that *BATMAN RETURNS* is flawless. Burton has been accused of being unable to "tell a story." It is true that several story elements are left unexplained: Penguin's scheme to frame Batman is left unresolved; the assault by Penguin's feathered army is totally unprecipitated; and if Shreck's Department Store has been recently blown up, how can the later masquerade ball be held there? Still, the few plot inconsistencies are more than made up for by memorable performances and daring production design and makeup, all presented in one big demented Christmas box.

*BATMAN RETURNS* has been berated by critics and audiences for its somber and cynical themes and its unexpectedly grotesque depiction of the Penguin. Bat-purists take note: The first appearances of the waddling villain in Bob Kane's comics portrayed him as a maniacal killer. It's true that his persona softened over the years, and it is Burgess Meredith's campy TV interpretation that has remained in the public's mind. However, in a recent interview, Kane confirmed "... if I had my wish, I'd rather have the mysterious, profound Batman characters. Burton is a wonderful director... He and I think alike."

As for the disturbingly dark tone of the film, fairy tales have always been dark: Bluebeard murders his wives, the poor Little Match Girl freezes to death, Cinderella endures appalling maltreatment, and Alice's Wonderland is an extremely unpleasant place to visit. In their exaggerated presentations, such stories hold up an unforgiving mirror to the world in which we live. So it is in Gotham City.

Evidently, many viewers need a spoonful of sugar to help the blackness go down—but *BATMAN RETURNS* refuses to be candy-coated.

—Scot D. Ryerson  
and Michael O. Yaccarino



# Fine Feathered Fiend: Danny DeVito Interviewed

## by Scot D. Ryerson

**D**anny DeVito was born in Neptune, New Jersey, and raised at the Jersey shore, a fitting background for an actor who would later play the screen's most demented aquatic bird: the Penguin in *BATMAN RETURNS* (1992). DeVito attended the American Academy of Dramatic Arts and went on to appear in such films as *ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO'S NEST* (1975) and *RUTHLESS PEOPLE* (1986). He directed the hits *THROW MOMMA FROM THE TRAIN* (1987) and *THE WAR OF THE ROSES* (1989), and recently completed *HOFFA* (1992), starring ex-Joker Jack Nicholson. This alumnus of the long-running series *TAXI* is married to actress Rhea Perlman (Carla on NBC's *CHEERS*). The couple and their three children live in Los Angeles. Here, in an exclusive manic interview, DeVito needed little prompting to discuss his favorite role . . .

*Scarlet Street:* You were always the perfect choice to play the Penguin. How did you actually land the role?

**Danny DeVito:** After the first *BATMAN* came out, rumors immediately started that I'd be playing the Penguin in the sequel. I said I wasn't interested in doing it. Then Tim Burton called and we got together. He came prepared with a drawing he'd done of this "penguin-boy." We talked over his idea of the character and I said, "This man's sick! I love it! I'll do it!"

*SS:* What did you do to prepare?

**DDV:** They say that each character you play is a part of yourself, but I don't know where Penguin came from. He was the most evil character I've ever played. It was great to let all of that out. I remember the cute, comical

image of the Penguin from reading the originals as a kid. That didn't appeal to me. What did appeal to me was that same character gone insane. This Penguin's a real genius. I love him.

*SS:* Your makeup for the film was horrendously believable.

**DDV:** The makeup helped me to find the character. The costumes, too. I wore the makeup 12 hours a day, sometimes even longer, for about three months. It was sad to see him go at the end of the day. The hand makeup took a while to get used to. Those flippers! I kept dropping things. The full makeup, including 60 pounds of body padding, took about three hours a day. While it was being applied, I sat watching old movies in the mirror. It worked great for everything but subtitles.

*SS:* Did you do your own stunts?

**DDV:** All of the stunts! Driving the duck-car, the flying—I did them all! The worst was getting in and out of that pool of water at the end of the film. That was tough; the set was so cold! That and that scene where I'm hit with tomatoes, lettuce, and eggs take after take, but if Penguin did it, I wanted to do it.

*SS:* What was it like working with all those penguins?

**DDV:** The penguins? My babies? They were great! They were all over the set, tons of them! Real ones, fake ones, and people in costumes. There were some really big ones about my size. Do you

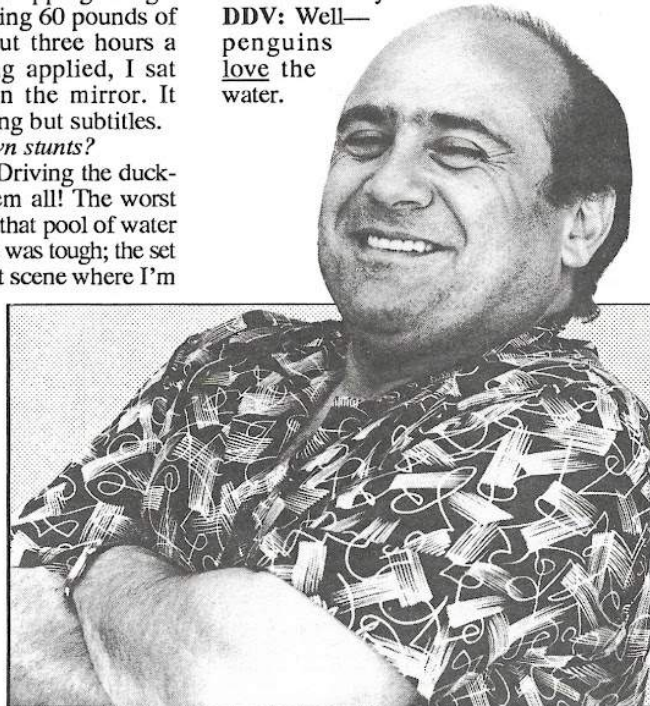
know what it's like to turn around and look a penguin in the face?

*SS:* Daniel Waters' script is filled with so many references, including some from the Bible. . . .

**DDV:** Tim and I pictured Penguin as really big, almost operatic. There were lots of references from the Bible, like Moses in the basket. And opera, too. Especially the ending. The script was great! I had so many one-liners! I loved every minute of being Penguin.

*SS:* One last question: Does Penguin really die at the end of the movie?

**DDV:** Well—penguins love the water.



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Produced by: HAL CHESTER and JACK BIELE - Distributed by: WARNER BROS.

**BEAST FROM 20,000 FATHOMS** (1953) Paul Christian, Kenneth Tobey, Paula Raymond, Cecil Kellaway, Lee Van Cleef. Classic 50s sci-fi that spawned countless imitations, (Toho pays daily homage to this film). A prehistoric monster, freed from its icy crypt by an atomic blast, makes its way to the New York metropolitan area where it rips through the city, eventually ending up entwined in the twisting tracks of the giant, Coney Island rollercoaster. An unforgettable climax with sensational Ray Harryhausen special effects. One of the most beloved films of its kind. From 35mm. \$159

**BLACK SABBATH** (1963) Boris Karloff, Mark Damon, Michelle Mercier, Jacqueline Pieroux. A Mario Bava masterpiece! Karloff hosts and stars in this superb trilogy of horror stories, all of which are unforgettable. "The Drop of Water" concerns a nurse who steals a ring off a dead spiritualist, only to have the corpse seek revenge. "The Telephone" features a prostitute who's terrorized by phone calls from a dead client. The final and best is, "The Wurdalak" featuring Karloff as a vampire who preys upon the blood of his loved ones. Better than **BLACK SUNDAY** in the minds of many critics and fans alike. AIP scored big with this one. From 16mm. H176



**GODDESS OF LOVE IN A CITY OF SIN!**  
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MICHELE MORGAN  
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**SECRET OF THE TELEGRAM** (1962) Koji Tsuruta, Tadao Nakamura, Akihiko Hirata. One of the rarest of all Japanese sci-fi films. Men are being mysteriously murdered by a vengeful madman known as "the Telegram", who uses a matter transmitting device to find his intended victims no matter where they hide. Released in the U.S. in B&W only. From 16mm. \$161

**FABIOLA** (1951) Michele Morgan, Henri Vidal, Michel Simon, Gino Cervi. Long before Steve Reeves and the muscular epics of the late 50s there was **FABIOLA**. The granddaddy of all Italian spectacle films. Considered by many to be the best of its kind. Court intrigue abounds as merciless Roman aristocrats plot the genocide of Christians before the arrival of Constantine. Rated 4 stars by Leonard Maltin. From 16mm. \$563

**THE BEATNIKS** (1960) Tony Travis, Peter Breck, Karen Kadler, Joyce Terry. One of the rarest and most sought after J.D. films. The good looking leader of a gang of beatnik thieves is heard singing along with a jukebox by a roving talent scout who offers him a chance at the big time. His beatnik buddy isn't too crazy about him breaking from the gang and sets out to cause trouble. From 35mm. JS24



**GIRLS WITHOUT SHAME**  
**GUN GIRLS**  
GANG GIRLS ON THE LOOSE!  
Jeanne Ferguson • Jean Ann Lewis • Jacquelyn Park • Tim Farrell  
With music by: BOB MARLEY  
**GUN GIRLS** (1956) Timothy Farrell, Jean Ferguson, Jacquelyn Park, Jean Ann Lewis. A gang of gun toting babes are on the prowl, holding up everything and everybody in sight. Farrell fences their stolen goods and gets his gun moll girlfriend pregnant. An exploitation masterpiece that reeks of that magical, Ed Woodian hilarity. From 35mm. X060

**DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE** (1913) King Baggot, Jane Gail, Matt Snyder, Howard Crampton. The first Universal horror film! The classic Stevenson story about a scientist who attempts to separate the good and evil found in all men. Baggot, who was a big star in the early days of Universal, essays the title role in this early, silent horror classic. ST33



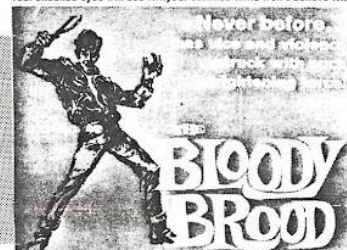
**THE MAD EXECUTIONERS** (1963) Wolfgang Preis, Chris Howland, Maria Perschy. From the pen of Edgar Wallace. A mad scientist decapitates his victims and tries to keep their heads alive. Meanwhile, a group of strange vigilantes are capturing and murdering "criminals" without benefit of public trial. Is there a connection? Scotland Yard investigates. Released here by Paramount. Letterboxed in scope. From 16mm. H178



**THE DAY THE EARTH FROZE** (1959) Nina Anderson, Jon Powers, Peter Sorenson. A superb Finnish/Soviet fantasy epic about an evil witch who steals the sun and causes just about everything on the Earth to freeze. Also featured are magic harps, fields of snakes, a wizard, and a magic mill. Released here by A.I.P. From 16mm. F019

**THE BLOODY BROOD** (1959) Peter Falk, Jack Betts, Barbara Lord. An intense an sometimes brutal film about a drug dealing gang of beatniks who get their kicks by perverse and violent means. (They feed a messenger boy a hamburger laced with ground glass). Extremely well done for such a low budget vehicle. Falk is excellent. From 35mm. JS23

Your shocked eyes will see it...your stunned mind won't believe it...



STARRING PETER FALK/JACK BETTS/BARBARA LORD  
produced and directed by Julian Roffman, released by Sutton Pictures Corp





**COMMON LAW WIFE** (1963) Anne MacAddams, Max Anderson, George Edgely, Lucy Kelly. A brickhouse sex kitten makes the move on everyone from young studs to old men. (She has a good time doing it, too). An amazing exploitation cheapie that ranges from unintentional hilarity to dramatic intensity rarely found in films of this nature. Climax is gritty and shocking. A great party film. Rated "R". From 35mm. X063



**LIGHTNING BOLT** (1965) Anthony Easley, Diana Lorys, Ursula Parker. Directed by Antonio Margheriti. A secret agent goes after a madman who plots world domination from his incredible underwater city. He and his cohorts deflect moon rockets launched from Cape Kennedy by blasting them out of the sky with laser beams. Much in the spirit of James Bond with a nice blend of sci-fi and espionage. From 16mm. SP09

**THE NARCOTIC STORY** (1956) Narrated by Art Gilmore. A lurid expose about the evils of heroin addiction. Originally intended for police seminars only, then released to the general public with a sensational ad campaign. The depiction of burned out heroin addicts is hilarious. This stuff was supposed to scare us when we were kids. From 35mm. X061



This police film caused a furor when it was released to the general public in 1958.

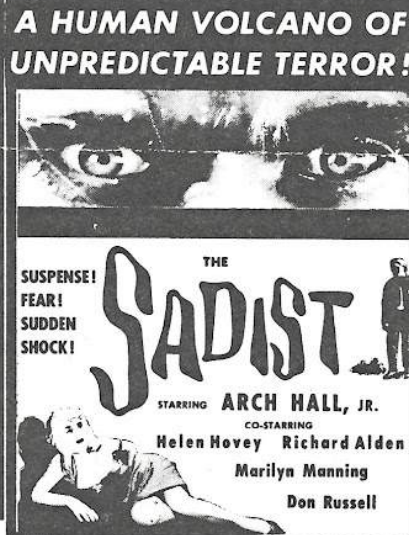


**THE PRIME TIME** (1960) Jo Ann LeCompte, Frank Roche, Karen Black, Ray Gronow. Directed by H.G. Lewis. Hershell's most sought after non-gore film. A fairly racy story about a young girl who gets involved with teenage vigilantes, a slimy detective, and a beatnik artist who forces her to pose nude. Gritty to say the least. Rated "R". From 35mm. X062

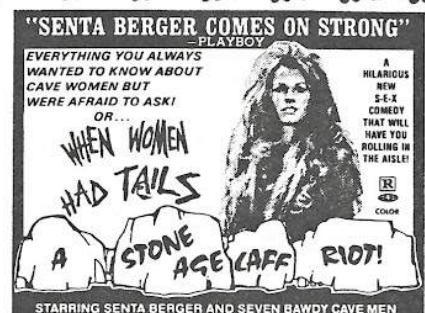
**BULLDOG DRUMMOND AT BAY** (1937) John Lodge, Victor Jory, Dorothy Mackall, Hugh Miller. In this British entry to the series, we find Drummond up against foreign agents trying to steal plans for a top-secret aircraft. Lodge is quite good in the title role. Released here by Republic. From 16mm. M210



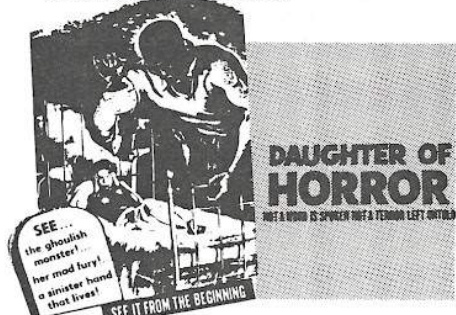
**MILL OF THE STONE WOMEN** (1960) Wolfgang Preiss, Pierre Brice, Dany Carrel, Scilla Gabel. An exhibit of strange female statues in an old windmill turns out to be a bizarre front for a mad scientist who's murdering young girls and using their blood to keep his daughter alive. The statues, needless to say, aren't really what they appear to be. A nightmarish and gruesome film. Need any spare body parts? H172



**THE SADIST** (1963) Arch Hall, Jr., Helen Hovey, Richard Alden, Marilyn Manning. The greatest low-budget, psycho-horror movie ever made, period, bar none. Three people driving into L.A. for a Dodgers game have car trouble and pull into an old wrecking yard where they're held at bay by a bloodthirsty psycho and his crazy girlfriend. They put their captives through pure hell in this thriller that was easily 10 years ahead of its time. Brutal and shocking. It's almost inconceivable that the same people that made hilarious schlock like Eegah and Wild Guitar could have made such an intense, riveting, minor masterpiece. You'll break a cold sweat watching this one. Our highest recommendation. From 35mm. H175



**WHEN WOMEN HAD TAILS** (1970) Senta Berger, Frank Wolff. A real comball caveman fantasy featuring a sometimes topless Ms. Berger complete with Lady Godiva hair and tail. Kind of a neanderthal version of Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs. Hokey, but fun, with lots of prehistoric slapstick. Senta's a knockout. From 35mm. S165



**DAUGHTER OF HORROR** (1955) Adrienne Barrott, Bruno VeSota, Angelo Rossitto. Narrated by Ed McMahon. A strange, fascinating film about a wandering girl who falls into a strange series of events that culminates with her sawing off the hand of the man she has murdered. The film has virtually no dialogue and is done in a wandering, dream-like style. A favorite of many obscurists. From 16mm. H171

**MONSTERS CRASH THE PAJAMMA PARTY** (1965) Don Brandon. Probably the rarest horror movie from the 1960s. Shown theatrically in combination with a live act. A group of teenagers invade a 'haunted house' to find a mad scientist conducting weird experiments. At a certain point in the film, the scientist sends his henchmen out to seek new victims. They run towards the camera as though they're running into the audience. The screen goes dark. At this point, real live people were supposed to run up and down the aisles looking for victims. They grab a girl from the audience, carry her screaming through the exit curtains, and then magically reappear with their new victim on the screen. A must see for all collectors of horror obscurities. From 35mm. H180



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**GIRL IN HIS POCKET** (1957) Jean Marais, Genevieve Page, Jean Claude Brilly. An eccentric scientist discovers a method for shrinking people. He uses his girlfriend as a guinea pig with somewhat comical results. From 16mm. \$160

**SECRET OF THE TELEGIAN** (1962) Koji Tsuruta, Tadao Nakamura. Men are being mysteriously murdered by a vengeful madman known as "the Telegian", who uses a matter transmitting device to find his intended victims no matter where they hide. From 16mm. \$161

CRAZED LOVE OF A PREHISTORIC GIANT FOR A RAVISHING TEEN-AGE GIRL!



THE NAME WRITTEN IN BLOOD!

**EEGAH** (1962) Arch Hall, Jr., Richard Kiel, Marilyn Manning, Arch Hall, Sr. Hilarious shock about three people who discover an actual caveman living out in the desert. Where would American culture be without Fairway International Pictures? Incredible. From 35mm. \$162

**LIGHTNING BOLT** (1965) Anthony Eisley, Diana Lorys. A secret agent goes after a madman who deflects moon rockets launched from Cape Kennedy by blasting them out of the sky with a giant laser gun. A nice blend of sci-fi and espionage. From 16mm. \$P09

**TERROR BENEATH THE SEA** (1966) Sinichi "Sonny" Chiba, Mike Daneel. A mad scientist is turning people into water breathing robot monsters! He plans world domination from his incredible underwater city. Terrific transformation scenes. From 16mm. \$163

**DESTROY ALL PLANETS** (1968) Peter Williams, Kajiro Hongo, Toru Takatsuka. Another epic Gamera film. This time the fire-breathing, flying, prehistoric turtle battles invading aliens whose spaceship can turn into a giant flying squid. From 16mm. \$164

**WHEN WOMEN HAD TAILS** (1970) Senta Berger, Frank Wolff. A caveman fantasy featuring a sometimes topless Ms. Berger in kind of a neanderthal version of Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs. Lots of prehistoric slapstick. Senta's a knockout. From 35mm. \$165

### HORROR

**DAUGHTER OF HORROR** (1955) Adrienne Barrett, Bruno VeSota. A fascinating film about a wandering girl who falls into an eerie series of events that culminates with her saving off the hand of the man she has murdered. The film no dialogue and is done in a dream-like style. From 16mm. \$171

**MILL OF THE STONE WOMEN** (1960) Wolfgang Preiss, Pierre Brice, Dany Carrel. An exhibit of strange female statues in an old windmill turns out to be a bizarre front for a mad scientist who's murdering young girls and using their blood to keep his daughter alive. From 16mm. \$172

**THE NAKED WITCH** (1963) Libby Hall, Robert Short. Reference books are wrong. Directed by Larry Buchanan, not Andy Milligan. Shot in Texas, not New York. An ancient witch comes back to life when a student removes a stake from her heart. She seeks out bloody revenge against the local village. Some hilarious shots of her running around naked while someone holds their finger over the camera lens to block out her vital organs. Much of the film is scored with organ music similar to CARNIVAL OF SOULS, the rest with themes from TEENAGERS FROM OUTERSPACE. From 35mm. \$173

**BLUEBEARD** (1963) Michele Morgan, Charles Donner, Hildegard Neff. The macabre, twisted tale of the famous French maniac who did away with his many wives. This well done French production has an almost black comedic touch to it. Dubbed in English. From 16mm. \$174



WHY DOES HE DO IT?

VICTOR BUONO Shock Sensation of "Baby Jane" AS THE STRANGLER

**THE SADIST** (1963) Arch Hall, Jr., Helen Hovey, Richard Alden. Three people driving into L.A. have car trouble and pull into an old wrecking yard where they're held at bay by a bloodthirsty psycho and his crazy girlfriend. Our highest recommendation. From 35mm. \$175

**BLACK SABBATH** (1963) Boris Karloff, Mark Damon, Michelle Mercier. A Mario Bava masterpiece! Karloff hosts and stars in this superb trilogy of horror stories: "The Drop of Water", "The Telephone", and "The Wurdalak", featuring Karloff as a vampire. From 16mm. \$176

**THE STRANGLER** (1963) Victor Buono, Ellen Corby, David McLean. There's a mad killer on the loose in the form of an overweight lab technician. His victims are the nurses who attend his overpossessive mother. From 16mm. \$177

**THE MAD EXECUTIONERS** (1963) Wolfgang Preiss, Chris Howland, Maria Perschy. A mad scientist decapitates his victims and tries to keep their heads alive. Scotland Yard investigates. From 16mm. \$178

**SIN YOU SINNERS** (1964) A has-been exotic dancer gets her hands on an ancient amulet that enables her to project youthfulness. Through it she manipulates the lives of the people around her. An abrupt twist ending. From 35mm. \$179

**MONSTERS CRASH THE PAJAMMA PARTY** (1965) Don Brandon. Shown theatrically in combination with a live act. Teenagers in a 'haunted house' find a mad scientist conducting weird experiments. At one point in the film, the screen goes dark as the scientist sends his henchmen out into the audience to seek new victims. From 35mm. \$180

**SINTIA: THE DEVIL'S DOLL** (1970) Shula Roan, Diane Webber. Weird, nightmarish stuff from Ray Dennis Steckler. A young girl has strange, twisted dreams of killing her father. Devil Possession? Definitely rated "R". From 16mm. \$181

**BEAST OF THE YELLOW NIGHT** (1971) John Ashley, Mary Wilcox. A wacked out disciple of the Devil is able to absorb evil from the souls of the people he murders. He eventually turns into a horrible monster. Roger Corman was executive producer. From 35mm. \$182

**DEVIL TIMES FIVE** (1974) Gene Evans, Sorrell Booke, Lell Gurrell. A macabre story of torture and murder at a mountain refuge. The culprits are five children who have escaped from a mental institution. From 16mm. \$183



She had the body of a goddess... But within her raged the fire of hell. For out of the realm of death itself had come...

THE NAKED WITCH

On her mission of death.

an Adult picture

THE STRANGEST STORY EVER TOLD!

Returned from the dead  
 to stalk human prey...



BEAST OF THE YELLOW NIGHT

JOHN ASHLEY - MARY WILCOX



NOT SINCE "VILLAGE OF THE DAMNED" HAS DEATH BECOME SO SAVAGE...

DEVIL TIMES FIVE

A BARNSTER PRODUCTION A SEYMOUR BORDE AND ASSOCIATES RELEASE

### SWORD AND SANDAL

**FABIOLA** (1951) Michele Morgan, Henri Vidal, Michel Simon. The granddaddy of all Italian spectacle films. Court intrigue abounds as merciless Roman aristocrats plot the genocide of Christians before the arrival of Constantine. Rated 4 stars by Leonard Maltin. From 16mm. \$S63

**GLADIATORS OF ROME** (1962) Gordon Scott, Wandisa Guida, Roberto Rissi. IN COLOR FOR THE FIRST TIME. Scott plays a muscular hero who protects a slave girl (secretly a princess) from marauding Roman warriors. He eventually ends up in the arena. From 16mm. \$S64

**THE VAMPIRES** (1964) Gordon Scott, Glanna Marie Canale. The mighty Gollath is pitted against an evil vampire and his army of faceless robots. Color, from 16mm. \$S65





**COLOSSUS AND THE AMAZON QUEEN** (1964) Rod Taylor, Ed Fury, Dorian Gray. Two Trojan war veterans are hired to take a ship to a far off island. They arrive to find it inhabited by lusty Amazons! Color, from 16mm. \$566  
**HERCULES OF THE DESERT** (1964) Kirk Morris, Helene Chanel. Hercules comes to the aid of nomads who are being suppressed by and evil princess. Color, from 16mm. \$567

## FANTASY

**DAY THE EARTH FROZE** (1959) Nina Anderson, Jon Powers, Peter Sorenson. A superb Finnish/Soviet fantasy epic about an evil witch who steals the sun and causes just about everything on the Earth to freeze. Color, from 16mm. F019  
**THE MAGIC FOUNTAIN** (1961) Sir Cedric Hardwicke, Hans Conreid. An evil dwarf changes princes into ravens. Based on a Grimm Bros. fairy tale. Color, from 16mm. F010

## SILENT THRILLS

**DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE** (1913) King Baggot, Jane Gail, Matt Snyder. The first Universal horror film! Baggot, who was a big star in the early days of the company, essays the title role in this early, silent horror classic. From 16mm. \$T33  
**THE AVENGING CONSCIENCE** (1914, aka **THE TELLTALE HEART**) Henry B. Walthal, Blanche Sweet, Mike Morris, Robert Harron. An extremely well done D. W. Griffith opus, which is arguably the first major horror film. Based on elements from three Poe classics: **THE PIT AND THE PENDULUM**, **THE TELLTALE HEART**, and **ANNABEL LEE**. From 16mm. \$T34  
**COAST PATROL** (1925) Fay Wray, Kenneth McDonald. A daring Federal agent is assigned to stop the activities of a murderous gang of smugglers. A sexy, ex-vamp helps the agent bring the smugglers to justice. From 16mm. \$T35  
**SHIPS OF THE NIGHT** (1928) Jacqueline Logan, Sojin, Jack Mower, Andy Clyde. A beautiful adventuress encounters heartstopping adventures involving criminals, pirates, and harem slaves as she searches for her fugitive brother, who wounded a man that was later found viciously murdered. From 16mm. \$T36  
**BELOW THE DEADLINE** (1929) Frank Leigh, Barbara Worth, Arthur Rankin. An innocent man is framed for embezzlement by a gang of cunning criminals. A sympathetic detective sets him free so he can clear himself. From 16mm. \$T37

## EXPLOITATION

**GUN GIRLS** (1956) Timothy Farrell, Jean Ferguson, Jacquelyn Parks. Gun toting babes are on the prowl, holding up everything and everybody in sight. An exploitation masterpiece that reeks of that magical, Ed Woodian hilarity. From 35mm. X060  
**THE NARCOTIC STORY** (1958) Narrated by Art Gilmore. A lurid expose about the evils of heroin addiction. The depiction of burned out heroin addicts is pretty hilarious. This stuff was supposed to scare us when we were kids. From 35mm. X061  
**PRIME TIME (aka HELLKITTEN)** (1960) Jo Ann LeCompte, Frank Roche, Karen Black. Directed by H.G. Lewis. A fairly racy story about a young girl who gets involved with teenage vigilantes, a slimy detective, and a beatnik artist who forces her to pose nude. Rated "R". From 35mm. X062



**COMMONLAW WIFE** (1963) Anne MacAddams, Max Anderson, Lucy Kelly. A brickhouse sex kitten makes the move on everyone from young studs to old men. (She has a good time doing it, too). The ending is gritty and shocking. A terrific party film. Rated "R". From 35mm. X063

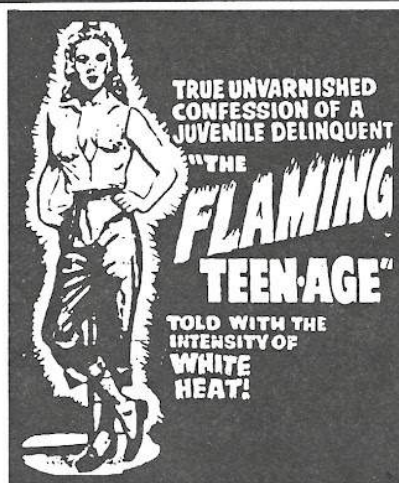
**SECRET FILE, HOLLYWOOD** (1962, aka **SCANDALTOWN**) Robert Clarke, Francine York, Syd Mason. Your Jaw will drop at this must-see, schlock hall of famer. An extremely campy story about an ex-detective who digs up dirt for a hollywood scandal sheet. One of his stories causes a lady to commit suicide. You can see the microphone hanging down in half the film! (no exaggeration). It's incredible this film was even released. From 35mm. X064

**NAUGHTY NEW ORLEANS** (1962) Sorny, Rita Parker, Porkchops and Kidney Stew. No storyline to follow, just sit back and enjoy this nostalgic lineup of old burlesque routines. From 35mm. X065

**SAVAGES FROM HELL** (1968) William Kelley, Viola Boyd, Bobbie Byers. The leader of a vicious motorcycle gang kidnaps a farmworker's daughter. He also beats her brother for messing around with his woman. From 35mm. X066

**SHANTY TRAMP** (1966) Bill Rogers, produced by K. Gordon Murray. A sleazy evangelist puts the move on a small towns shanty tramp. She makes a move on a local black kid which almost gets him lynched. From 35mm. X067

## JUVENILE SCHLOCK

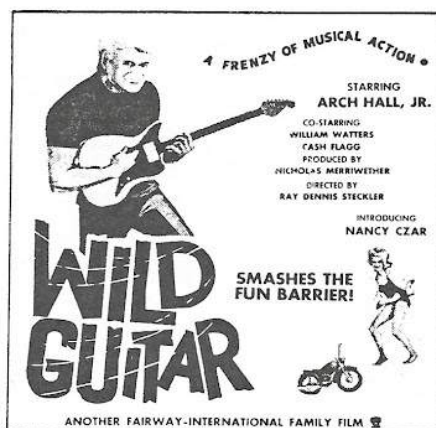


**THE FLAMING TEENAGE** (1956) Noel Reyburn, Ethel Barrett, Jerry Frank. What's happening to our kids these days, anyway. Alcohol and drug abuse, withdrawal, mad makeout scenes, robbery, and jail are just a few of the delicate topics covered in this rare J.D. epic. Some of the oldest "teenagers" ever seen on screen. From 35mm. JS22

**THE BLOODY BROOD** (1959) Peter Falk, Jack Betts, Barbara Lord. A brutal film about a drug dealing gang of beatniks who get their kicks by perverse and violent means. (They feed a boy some food laced with ground glass). Extremely well done for such a low budget vehicle. From 35mm. JS23

**THE BEATNIKS** (1960) (1960) Tony Travis, Peter Beck, Karen Kadler. The good looking leader of a beatnik gang is heard singing along with a jukebox by a talent scout who offers him the big time. His buddy isn't too crazy about him breaking from the gang and causes trouble. From 35mm. JS24

**WILD GUITAR** (1962) Arch Hall, Jr., Arch Hall, Sr., Ray Dennis Steckler. A young Arch, Jr. is given a shot at the big time by the unscrupulous owner of a small record company played by Arch, Sr. (aka William Waters). This movie is a real, hilarious gagster. From 35mm. JS25



## EDGAR WALLACE & CO.

**FORGER OF LONDON** (1961) Eddie Arent, Karin Dor, Helmut Lange. Scotland Yard investigates a clever ring of counterfeiters. The prime suspect is an amnesiac playboy. From 16mm. EW06

**INN ON THE RIVER** (1962) Klaus Kinski, Joachim Fuchsberger, Brigitte Grothum. Scotland Yard investigate a grisly series of murders being orchestrated by a master criminal known as "The Shark". From 16mm. EW07

**STRANGLER OF BLACKMOOR CASTLE** (1963) Karin Dor, Ingmar Zeisberg. A hooded fiend is murdering people inside a creepy old English castle. Scotland Yard sends an investigator to track down the killer. From 16mm. H073

**THE INDIAN SCARF** (1963) Klaus Kinski, Heinz Drache, Corny Collins. The heirs to a dead man's fortune are being strangled one by one. The action centers around the dead man's creepy, country estate. From 16mm. EW08

**THE MAD EXECUTIONERS** (1963) Wolfgang Preiss, Chris Howland, Maria Perschy. A mad scientist decapitates his victims and tries to keep their heads alive. Scotland Yard investigates. From 16mm. H178

**THE MYSTERIOUS MAGICIAN** (1965) Joachim Fuchsberger, Eddie Arent, Heinz Drache. Though thought by Scotland Yard to be dead, the mad murderer known as "The Wizard", is alive and spreading a new reign of terror throughout London. From 16mm. EW09

## MYSTERY-SUSPENSE-FILM NOIR

**BULLDOG DRUMMOND AT BAY** (1937) John Lodge, Victor Jory, Dorothy Mackall, Hugh Miller. This time we find Drummond up against foreign agents trying to steal plans for a top-secret aircraft. Lodge is quite good in the title role. From 16mm. M210

**DEVIL DIAMOND** (1937) Kane Richmond, Frankie Darro. Two amateur detectives find their lives in danger when they track down a gang of evil jewel thieves. From 16mm. M211

**THE MYSTIC CIRCLE MURDER** (1938) Robert Fiske, Helene LeBerthon, Robert Frazer, Madame Harry Houdini. A phoney mystic known as the Great La Gagne cons unsuspecting women of their fortunes. One of his fake apparitions even causes heart attack. Mme. Houdini sets the record straight about life after death. From 16mm. M212  
**THE PANTHER'S CLAW** (1942) Sidney Blackmer, Lynn Starr, Byron Foulger. An interesting PRC mystery about a ruthless killer in an opera company. Foulger is excellent as a topish suspect. From 16mm. M213

**SIG TOWN** (1947, aka **GUILTY ASSIGNMENT**) Philip Reed, Robert Lowery, Hilary Brooke. A newspaper editor and a reporter solve a series of murders. Editor begins to go corrupt. From 16mm. M214

**TRAPPED** (1949) Lloyd Bridges, John Hoyt, Barbara Payton. Treasury agents try to crack a ruthless ring of counterfeiters. They allow a criminal to escape hoping he will lead them to the gang. From 16mm. M215

**THE SWINDLE** (1955) Broderick Crawford, Richard Basehart. Directed by Federico Fellini. Interesting story of three con men who fleece the poor people of Rome out of their money. From 16mm. M216

**MURDER AT 45 R.P.M.** (1961) Danielle Darrieus, Michael Aulclair. A singer is haunted by her dead husband. This, needless to say, causes problems between her and her new lover. From 16mm. M217

**STAKEOUT** (1962) Bing Russell, Bill Hale, Eve Brent. An interesting story about an ex-con and his young son who can't find work because of the fathers criminal record. He eventually turns back to crime. From 16mm. M218

## SPYS, ESPIONAGE, & INTRIGUE

**LADIES MAN** (1962) Eddie Constantine. One of Eddie's many portrayals as super sleuth/agent, Lemmy Caution. This time the action is set on the French Riviera. From 16mm. SP06  
**AS IF IT WERE RAINING** (1963) Eddie Constantine, Henri Cogan, Elisa Montes. In this thriller we find Eddie in Spain where he becomes involved with an embezzlement scheme. From 16mm. SP07

**MISSION TO VENICE** (1963) Sean Flynn, Madeleine Robinson. Errol's son, Sean plays a sleuth attempting to find a missing husband. He stumbles upon a ring of spies in the process. From 16mm. SP08

**LIGHTNING BOLT** (1965) Anthony Eisley, Diana Lorys. A secret agent goes after a madman who deflects moon rockets launched from Cape Kennedy by blasting them out of the sky with laser beams. Much in the spirit of James Bond with a nice blend of sci-fi and espionage. From 16mm. SP09

**RED DRAGON** (1967) Stewart Granger, Rosanna Schiaffino, Horst Frank. Stewart and Rosanna play agents in Hong Kong trying to crack a notorious smuggling ring. From a Technicolor 35mm print. SP10





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# THANK YOU., MR.. BECK

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## An Interview with Thomas Beck

by Richard Valley

CHARLIE CHAN AT THE OPERA! THANK YOU, MR. MOTO! When Charlie Chan, filmdom's most popular detective, matched wits with the mad musical genius Gravelle in a dark Los Angeles opera house, Thomas Beck was right on the scene. When the mysterious Mr. Moto fought a murderous gang of cutthroats for possession of the lost treasure of Genghis Khan, Thomas Beck was right there, too. When sweet, adorable little Heidi kicked—well, that's another story, but it's one that Thomas Beck was happy to tell *Scarlet Street* during our exclusive interview with the handsome contract player of Hollywood's Golden Age. In the space of three years, from 1935 to 1937, the actor starred opposite his friend Warner Oland in four Chan features and still found time to appear in the first two Mr. Moto movies with Peter Lorre. Long retired from acting—which, at any rate, was only one of Mr. Beck's several successful careers—the favored companion of the world's most famous Oriental sleuths recently spoke with us from his home in Florida . . .

Photos courtesy of Thomas Beck





**Scarlet Street:** How and when did you become an actor?

**Thomas Beck:** Well, I graduated from Johns Hopkins University in 1932. That was the bottom of the Depression, you'll remember, if you're old enough.

**SS:** Not old enough to have been there...

**TB:** Anyhow, things were not as they should have been. We had a captain of our LaCrosse team, for instance, who was very popular and graduated a year before me, and all through my senior year he used to stand out in front of the entrance to the University selling apples. My father said, "Don't worry. We grew up in this town and I know a lot of people. We can take care of you." Well, I started to see my father's associates, and one of them said, "I can't do anything for you. I've got my best friend working for me, and I have to let him go." So, I got to thinking. I'd been doing amateur theatricals all through college, and I had met an agent who said, "If you ever want to do any theatre in New York, let me know." So, I didn't wait to get my diploma. I went to New York and met this guy, and started working in the theatre. And I was very fortunate. I got a part in a Broadway play—a good part with Grace George, Alice Brady, and A. E. Matthews—and that got me started in show business.

**SS:** What play was that?

**TB:** MADEMOISELLE. I did several plays and a lot of touring, a lot of theatre companies all over the place.

**SS:** As the juvenile lead?

**TB:** That's right. Then I got sick. I had some kind of a—something—wrong with me. The doctor said I'd have to take it easy and lie around on the beach and do nothing for awhile. I couldn't do that in New York, but I thought, "By golly, I can do that in California. There are lots of beaches out there." So I signed up with Fox.

**SS:** That was before Fox and 20th Century merged, wasn't it? It was just Fox.

**TB:** It was Fox, yes.

**SS:** So you signed up with the movies in order to get a rest?

**TB:** (Laughs) Well, I didn't see the beach for a year. They put me to work at Fox very quickly.

**SS:** Your first film was *HELL IN THE HEAVENS*, is that correct?

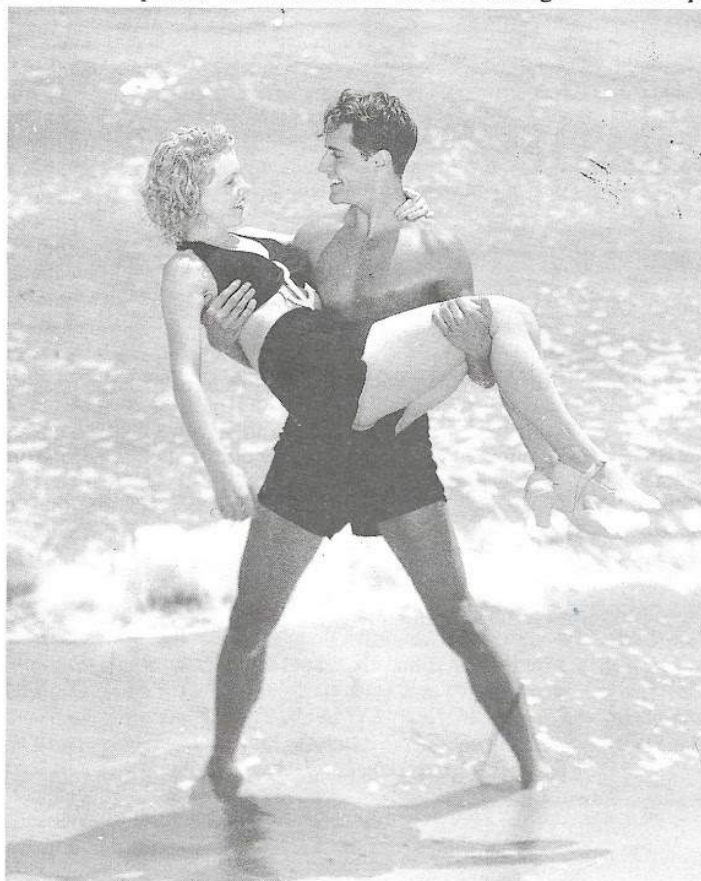
**TB:** Yes. It was nothing; I just sort of stood in the background. The first real part I had was with Charlie Chan.

**SS:** *CHARLIE CHAN IN PARIS*...

**TB:** Yes. It was about the same time that I did a movie with Alice Faye called *MUSIC IS MAGIC*.

**SS:** What was it like to work with Warner Oland, who played Chan?

**TB:** Absolutely delightful; he was a good friend of mine and we enjoyed working together. His wife was a good friend of mine, too. As a matter of fact, after he died, I got a letter from his wife. I had, meanwhile, left California and come back East. She wrote and asked if she could have my piano, which she knew I had in storage.



**ABOVE:** Newcomer Thomas Beck had one of his first leading roles in motion pictures in 1935's *MUSIC IS MAGIC*, starring Alice Faye and Bebe Daniels. **PREVIOUS PAGE:** Warner Oland, Mary Brian, and Thomas Beck looking less than inscrutable for 1935's *CHARLIE CHAN IN PARIS*.

She said she'd pay the storage bill and let me have it back when I was ready for it. Well, I wasn't ready for it, so I let her have it. Then, finally, when I was moving to Connecticut and knew I'd be there permanently, I got in touch with her to get the piano and she said, "What piano?" (Laughs) So that was the end of that!

**SS:** You were out one piano.

**TB:** There was nothing I could do about it, really, so I just stopped playing the piano. (Laughs)

**SS:** *CHARLIE CHAN IN PARIS* is the first movie in which Keye Luke appeared as Chan's son Lee.

**TB:** That's right.

**SS:** He hadn't acted before...

**TB:** He used to do posters of actors for the art department. He was a nice guy, very pleasant to work with and very clever. They were all nice people.

**SS:** It's amusing that the characters all have French names and American accents. Was there concern that you and Mary Brian and Eric Rhodes should sound more Gallic?

**TB:** You must remember that sound films were quite new, then, and they hadn't

thought it through that much. They were really very fortunate to get any sound recordings at all! One of the reasons that I was in the movie business was that I had theatrical experience and a professional way of speaking.

**SS:** *CHARLIE CHAN IN EGYPT* is considered to be one of the best in the series. It gives you more to do than some of the other ones.

**TB:** That's right.

**SS:** In fact, you're practically one of the murder victims! You get shot.

**TB:** (Laughs) Well, you see, it was after *CHARLIE CHAN IN EGYPT* that Darryl Zanuck took over and made a lot of changes. I was getting pretty good casting before Zanuck. At one time I went to one of the general managers and complained and got no sympathy at all. I was bawled out severely for daring to make a complaint.

**SS:** The studios basically ran an actor's life, didn't they? The publicity people told you who you could be seen with, who you could date...

**TB:** There was a very nice woman who used to do public relations for me, and one day, to my astonishment, I found out that Zanuck had fired her. I asked why, and somebody said, "Well, you must promise

not to tell anybody." I said, "All right; I won't tell. What was it?" And he said, "She told someone that Darryl Zanuck was having an affair with Tyrone Power." And I said, "Oh, my God! How stupid!" So I went to see her, and told her I was sorry she was gone and wished her well and all that. Well, the studio found out and was very unpleasant to me.

**SS:** Really?

**TB:** In a left-handed sort of way. But that began to steer me towards getting out.

**SS:** Well, that's certainly a surprise. We had heard that Tyrone Power had an affair with Errol Flynn!





**TOP LEFT:** Charlie Chan wants to know how an Egyptian mummy could possibly die of a gunshot wound. Pictured: Thomas Beck, Warner Oland, and Frank Conroy in *CHARLIE CHAN IN EGYPT* (1935). **BOTTOM LEFT:** The obligatory secret panel! Warner Oland is too hefty to enter the hidden room; Stepin Fetchit is too frightened. It's up to Our Hero Tom in *CHARLIE CHAN IN EGYPT*.

lake that you dive into. Did you do that stunt work yourself?

**TB:** I did and I had flu at the time. There was another film, called *CRACK UP*, where we were all in a plane. It went down in the ocean and we spent two weeks in water up to our waists, playing those scenes.

**SS:** That must have been unpleasant.

**TB:** Yes, it's true. I recently went to see the film. I saw it listed in a town south of here sometime last year, and I went down, sat in the theatre all by myself. Well, *CRACK UP* started and I discovered it was another film entirely; I'd nothing to do with it.

**SS:** The one that you made was your first film with Peter Lorre, wasn't it?

**TB:** Yes, that's right. And then I made some of the Mr. Moto films.

**SS:** What was Lorre like?

**TB:** He was very nice! An amusing guy with a wry sense of humor.

**SS:** He rarely got to use that quality in his films. He was always so menacing.

**TB:** He was a very clever man. I liked him.

**SS:** So, you were in a plane in the water with Peter Lorre. Brian Donlevy was in that film, too.

**TB:** That's right.

**SS:** As a matter of fact, you're the only person in the plane who survives!

**TB:** I think I swim somewhere and get on a yacht. There was another film—I think it was a Peter Lorre film—where I was swimming. I jumped out of a boat and swam to shore, and somebody was firing shots on either side of me. Well, they hadn't told me about it, and I got so Goddamned mad that, when I got out of the water, I just walked off the set and went to my dressing room and shut the door and wouldn't answer for a couple of hours. When I came out I told them that I thought it was inexcusable not to let me know what was gonna happen.

**SS:** We know the scene you mean. That was in *THANK YOU, MR. MOTO*.

**TB:** That's right.

**SS:** One of your co-stars in *CHARLIE CHAN IN EGYPT* was one of the best-known comics of the 30s, Stepin Fetchit...

**TB:** Oh, yeah! Great guy! I worked with several colored people out in Hollywood and they were all delightful. Stepin Fetchit was very funny.

**SS:** Nowadays, black comedians of the 30s are accused of having perpetuated negative stereotypes. In fact, it's looked down

**TB:** (Laughs) Everybody had an affair with everybody out there! The people who said so wanted to make money writing about it. Sometimes it was so, but many, many times it was purely imagination.

**SS:** Did you find yourself reading the papers and learning that you'd gone out with someone you'd never even met?

**TB:** I wasn't getting much publicity of any kind. And I wasn't objecting to it!

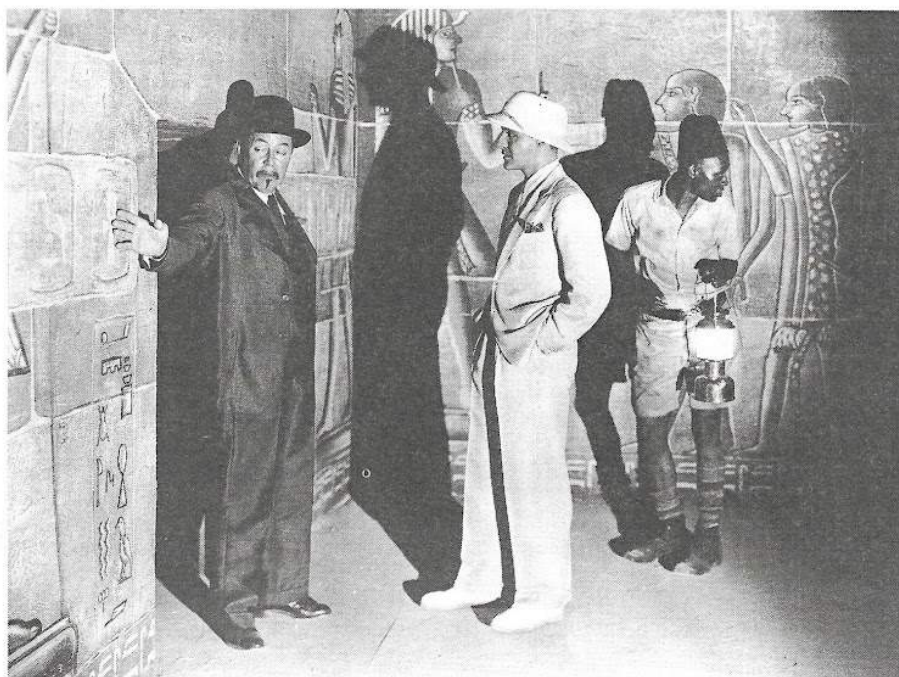
**SS:** We can imagine. It's well known that Tyrone Power had a number of relationships with men, yet he was married several times. Were actors who were homosexually inclined encouraged to be seen with as many women as possible?

**TB:** Well, that was the policy of the studios. I think it was established by MGM, to the point where they insisted on this type of coupling, in case there was any question of sexual preference. And, of course, if there were questions, then they made a decision as to whether they would drop the actor or cover it up. It depended on the actor's financial value.

**SS:** Were there cases where an actor was dropped by a studio?

**TB:** I wouldn't really know. I did know it was policy.

**SS:** In *CHARLIE CHAN IN EGYPT*, you and Warner Oland enter the tomb at night. There is a secret panel and an underground





# Warner Oland vs. Boris Karloff in CHARLIE CHAN AT THE OPERA

## by Richard Scrivani

*Very old Chinese wise man once say, madness twin brother of genius because each live in world created by own ego. One sometimes mistaken for other.*

Thus spake Warner Oland as Charlie Chan in a tense moment with suspected murderer Boris Karloff, defusing a dangerous situation as only Chan can and at the same time demonstrating the tact that endeared him to moviegoers of the 30s and 40s. CHARLIE CHAN AT THE OPERA endures as the most popular in a series numbering an astonishing 44 films, due not in small part to its setting and the presence of Karloff, making it an irresistible blend of mystery and horror.

Ohio-born Earl Derr Biggers gave birth to Chan in 1925 with his novel *The House Without a Key*, which made its way in serial form into the *Saturday Evening Post* the following fall. Having always wanted to write a mystery set in Hawaii, Biggers decided to include a Chinese detective after reading in a Honolulu newspaper about a case solved by two Oriental policemen. His brainchild, Charlie Chan, immediately caught on with the public. A sequel, *The Chinese Parrot*, followed in 1926 and was also serialized by the *Post*. Biggers went on to pen a total of six Chan novels, the final four entitled *Behind that Curtain* (1928), *The Black Camel* (1929), *Charlie Chan Carries On* (1930), and *Keeper of the Keys* (1932). When the earliest versions of Chan reached the screen, played by George Kuwa (a Japanese), E. L. Park (a Briton), and Kamiyama Sojin (another Japanese), he was hardly the star, usually showing up at the eleventh hour to wrap up the case. The series as we know it today began officially at Fox Films, with CHARLIE CHAN CARRIES ON (1931), featuring Warner Oland in the title role. Oland, an actor of Swedish ancestry, felt he owed his Oriental appearance to ancient Mongol invasions of Sweden and Finland. He had specialized in Eastern roles in the silents, playing Fu Manchu as well as a string of lesser-known Oriental villains. Horror fans know him best as the mysterious Dr. Yogami in Universal's WEREWOLF OF LONDON (1935), in which he inflicted the curse of lycanthropy on a moody Henry Hull. Oland's identification with Chan was immediate and complete, not only with moviegoers, but also on the set (a fact borne out by Keye Luke, who explained that Oland would speak to him between scenes as if addressing his screen son Lee Chan, using Chinese inflections and what became known as "Chanograms," the almost poetic words of wisdom peppered throughout the films). When CHARLIE CHAN AT THE OPERA was conceived with Boris Karloff in mind, fans couldn't wait for a confrontation between the famous detective and their favorite bogeyman.

The "horror" or supernatural element of OPERA was not new to the Chan films. There had been instances as far back as THE BLACK CAMEL (1931), which co-starred Bela Lugosi as a crystal gazer (and even had Dwight Frye, Lugosi's confederate in the same year's DRACULA, as a butler), and CHARLIE CHAN IN EGYPT (1935) with its atmospheric tombs and a

clue-carrying mummy. CHARLIE CHAN'S SECRET (1936) offered up a dark old estate called the Colby House, within which a seance resulted in ghostly manifestations. In 1939, Warner Oland's successor, Sidney Toler, dealt with psychics and mind-reading acts in a place called the Temple of Magic. The film, CHARLIE CHAN AT TREASURE ISLAND, was considered the best of the Toler entries.

The plot of CHARLIE CHAN AT THE OPERA, though a departure from the structure of earlier Chans—it seems to progress in small episodes rather than in a linear fashion—still employs as its "hook" a device common to Biggers' style: a mystery with its roots in events of years past. A former baritone named Gravelle (Karloff), suffering from amnesia, has been judged insane and locked away in an asylum. When an attendant shows him a newspaper with a picture of opera star Madame Lilli Rochelle (Margaret Irving) on the front page, his memory returns, prompting him to overpower the attendant, steal his uniform, and escape. Gravelle makes his way to Los Angeles, where the diva is performing in an opera called CARNIVAL. Across town, a frightened Lilli, accompanied by her escort, Enrico Barelli, visits the police to report a death threat that she has received in a basket of flowers sent by her jealous husband (Frank Conroy). Charlie Chan is called in to help the typically baffled police department, which includes wisecracking racist Sergeant Kelly (William Demarest). Kelly refers to Chan throughout the film as "Chop Suey" or "Egg Foo Young," but, prejudice aside, he has a relationship with Chan that calls to mind Inspector Lestrade and Sherlock Holmes. Further raising Kelly's blood pressure is Chan's No. 1 son, Lee (Keye Luke), making his fifth appearance in the series. Charlie and Lee are making arrangements to sail back to Honolulu, but manage to squeeze in one last case for the road. Meanwhile, back at the plot, Barelli's wife, Madame Lucrecia (Nedda Harrigan), is jealous of her husband's blatant affair with Lilli and makes her feelings clear. Thrown into the operatic stew at this point are young lovers Kitty Gravelle (Charlotte Henry) and Phil Childers (Thomas Beck). Kitty and Phil are seeking Mme. Lilli's permission to marry, the latter being Kitty's mother and (surprise) Gravelle's former wife. Kitty has no memory of her father, who disappeared years ago after being locked in a burning theatre and left for dead. With all of this going on—not to mention Sergeant Kelly chasing suspect Lee Chan (whom Charlie has disguised as a chorus boy) all over the opera house—we are served a *smorgasbord* of suspects when the story's two murders finally occur. Hiding in the dressing rooms, Gravelle shows himself to Mme. Lucrecia and announces that he has returned to find the one responsible for his "murder." His memory now fully restored, Gravelle hears the strains of CARNIVAL drifting through the halls and finds his way to Barelli's room, where he rants, "I've come back to take your part tonight!" Donning Barelli's costume and makeup as the dark god Mephisto, Gravelle knocks the baritone unconscious, makes his entrance during the performance, and frightens Lilli into



fainting during a scene in which he pulls a knife and supposedly stabs her. Unable to revive her backstage, the police chase "Barelli" back to his dressing room, where they find the real baritone dead from a knife wound. Shortly thereafter, Mme. Lilli is found in her dressing room, also fatally stabbed. Gravelle happens upon his daughter, who is waiting alone, and, in one of the most touching scenes in Karloff's career, pleads tenderly for the child to remember him, causing her to collapse in fear. Charlie hears the commotion and investigates, leading to the long-anticipated Oland/ Karloff confrontation. Employing a carefully chosen Chinese proverb neatly comparing madness to genius, Charlie manages to calm Gravelle and suggests a repeat performance as *Mephisto*—an ego trip for the singer, but also a ploy to trap the murderer for Chan. (This, of course, is accomplished, but the murderer's identity will in these pages remain a mystery.) As a postscript, the film offers a touching *dénouement* to the father/daughter subplot and allows Charlie and Lee to catch that boat back to Honolulu.

CHARLIE CHAN AT THE OPERA remains a favorite with fans for obvious reasons, but it is regarded as far from the best entry in terms of story development and execution. The presence of Boris Karloff, even though we *know* he can't be the killer, gives the film the look of a horror melodrama. (If there are any doubts as to the actor's identification with the macabre, they are dispelled by the stage manager's plum of a line: "This opera goes on tonight even if *Frankenstein* walks in!") Prior to the start of filming, movie-dom's favorite monster had wrapped up a 10-month stint in England making *THE MAN WHO LIVED AGAIN* and *JUGGERNAUT* (both 1936). Returning to Hollywood on Saturday, September 5, 1936, by train from the East Coast, he began work on the Chan film five days later.

In response to a prevailing public outcry against horror films, Fox kept the potentially horrific aspects of the film rather low-key. In the first half of the film, Karloff has little to do other than to lurk and peer through trap doors, but with the commencement of the opera he is well-utilized and seems to be enjoying himself immensely. Where else on film can we hear him belt out a tune in a strong baritone voice (very obviously on loan)? Even moments during which he is permitted to overact seem legit in light of Gravelle's supposed madness. Still, the actor's real high point comes in the aforementioned scene with Charlotte Henry, as he gently trills a lullaby from her childhood in the hope that

the young woman will remember him. His desperation as he begs ("Try to remember!") shows just how much pathos Karloff can convey and how easily he can move viewers to the point of tears. Chan's handling of Gravelle's fragile ego when he inadvertently comes upon the scene is tactful, intelligent, and tender. These moments raise the film above the standards one expects from a "B" movie of this kind.

The supporting cast has its share of familiar faces. Thomas Beck made his Chan-film debut (along with Keye Luke) in *CHARLIE CHAN IN PARIS* (1935). *CHARLIE CHAN IN EGYPT* and *CHARLIE CHAN AT THE RACE TRACK* (both 1936) followed. One might remember Charlotte Henry as Little Bo Peep in *BABES IN TOYLAND* (1934) with Laurel and Hardy, and in the title role of Paramount's *ALICE IN WONDERLAND* (1933). Margaret Irving cavorted with the Four Marx Brothers in their second film, *ANIMAL CRACKERS* (1930), and Frank Conroy would one day meet space traveler Michael Rennie (as Klaatu) in *THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL* (1951).

Director H. Bruce "Lucky" Humberstone, considered the all-around best craftsman on the Chan features, made good use of sets designed for the major Fox production *Café Metro-Pole* (1937), winning praise for making *CHARLIE CHAN AT THE OPERA* look like an "A" film. It was Humberstone's idea to cast Karloff, a hot property at the time, despite the extra cost his participation would incur.

Humberstone actually *encouraged* Warner Oland, already a problem drinker, to imbibe before shooting his scenes, and Oland agreed that the effect enhanced his characterization. It might even have been a Humberstone touch to bill his two leads in the opening credits as "Warner Oland VS. Boris Karloff."

The original operatic work entitled *CARNIVAL* was composed especially for the film by pianist and wit Oscar Levant (1906–1972). The music can be heard under the main titles as well as in the operatic sequences and, with its powerful melodies and sense of foreboding, serves the story well.

The finished film scored well with a preview audience and, soon after, Fox unveiled its plan to slot Warner Oland opposite a big-name star in future Chans. Announced for the next picture was Peter Lorre, but unfortunately this enticing team-up never took place. Instead, both Karloff and Lorre went on to play their own Oriental sleuths in their respective Mr. Wong and Mr. Moto series in the late 30s.

*CHARLIE CHAN AT THE OPERA* may not be the ultimate Chan film for purists, but it's a natural choice for an unindoctrinated audience and is guaranteed to stir up interest in the rest of the series.



*Stalwart hero Thomas Beck protects the former Miss Alice in Wonderland (Charlotte Henry) in 1936's CHARLIE CHAN AT THE OPERA.*

*Richard Scrivani is a regular contributor to Scarlet Street. He is a videotape engineer at the National Broadcasting Company.*







**ABOVE:** Thomas Beck was a robbery victim in 1936's *UNDER TWO FLAGS*: He had his death scene stolen by a famous left-profiled co-star. The actor is pictured fifth from the left in the Foreign Legion chorus line. **BELOW:** Thomas Beck, on the advice of his physician, originally went to California for his health. The prescription: "Lie around on the beach and do nothing." Instead, the young actor (pictured here with his sister) signed with Fox and didn't see the beach for a year!

on that an Asian actor never played Charlie Chan in the Fox series...

**TB:** Well, you know, Warner Oland was a Scandinavian. His great claim to fame as Chan was that he was able to raise his eyebrows without wrinkling his brow. He was able to put an Asian look on his face, but he actually didn't look Asian at all.

**SS:** Oland was wonderful in the part. In 1935, you played in *LIFE BEGINS AT FORTY*, with Will Rogers.

**TB:** Rogers was kind of interesting. He was absorbed in his own work, in his writing, and many times he would excuse himself from the stage and we had to stop work and wait while he did some writing. He had a column in the newspaper and he'd suddenly think of something else when he was supposed to be acting. But he was interesting to work with; he was a nice man.

**SS:** He's famous, of course, for saying he never met a man he didn't like, so we assume he liked you.

**TB:** We got along. It was a sort of "How do you do" thing, not like it was with Warner.

**SS:** Another film you made was the first in the Jones Family series. It was called *EVERY SATURDAY NIGHT*.

**TB:** The Jones Family, yes.

**SS:** But you're only in the first one?

**TB:** That's right. Well, I die in it!

**SS:** Oh, you die!

**TB:** I get killed in an automobile accident.

**SS:** Well, that explains why you didn't show up in the sequels!

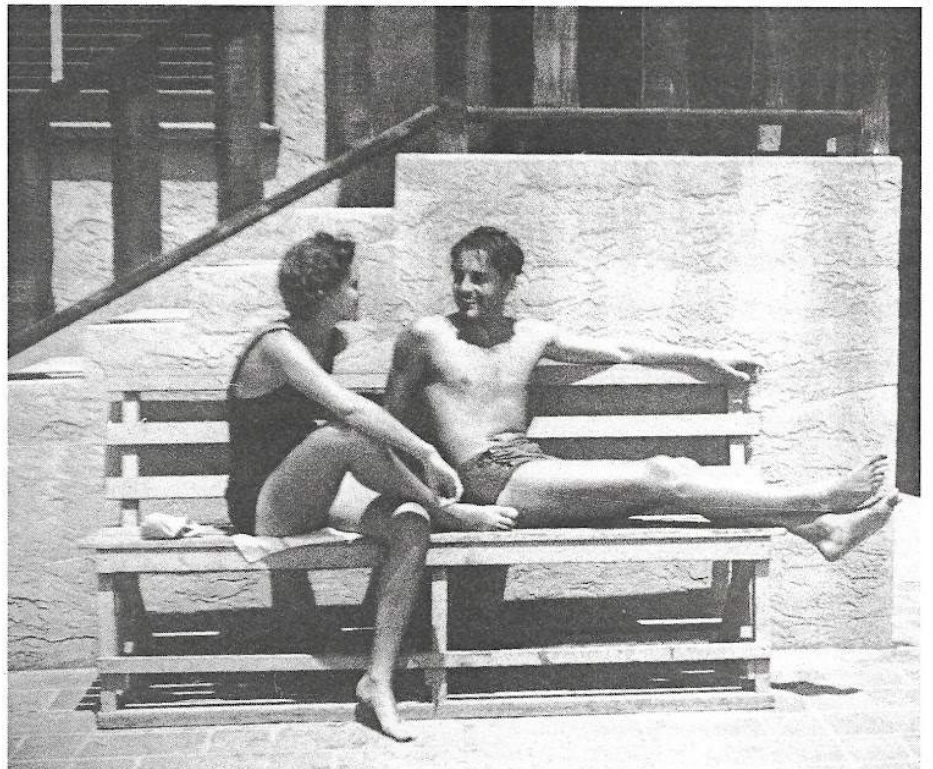
**TB:** That's one reason! (Laughs)

**SS:** Now, in *UNDER TWO FLAGS*...

**TB:** Oh, yeah. I had a great sadness with that film. I played a soldier in the Foreign Legion, and I had a scene with Ronald Colman where I died. I knew about it 'way

ahead of time, so I did a lot of investigation, went to hospitals, talked to doctors, talked to nurses—all to get an idea of how people behaved when they were in that condition, when they were dying. Frank Lloyd, the director, was very, very pleased with what I was doing. I had to speak quite softly; it was raining and the cameraman raised an objection to it. The director said, "Just wait until it stops. We're not going to spoil this scene." And I was most appreciative of

that. My death scene consisted of Colman finding me and turning me over to look at my face, holding me up for a long time while we spoke our lines, and then, when we got through, letting me go when I died. Well, I went to see the preview. Colman picked me up, he looked at me, he dropped me, and that was the scene! Later on in the film, the leading lady had a death scene with Colman, and she played my scene, just as I'd played it!







**SS:** That wasn't very fair. Why, she stole your best scene!

**TB:** By the way, it was Claudette Colbert...

**SS:** Well, she had a nerve!

**TB:** (Laughs) That was another reason I left Hollywood!

**SS:** You said that you had better parts in the Chan series when they were made by Fox. When the merger came with 20th Century, your parts were not as meaty.

**TB:** That didn't apply particularly to Charlie Chan. I don't know whether this should be publicized or not, but one of the reasons the studio kept me with Warner Oland is that they discovered he enjoyed my company and talking with me, and didn't drink as much!

**SS:** Oh!

**TB:** (Laughs) That's what they told me. I was never aware that he drank a lot!

**SS:** Well, that's nice; you acted with him and babysat as well. Your first Chan after the studio merger was *CHARLIE CHAN AT THE OPERA*...

**TB:** As a matter of fact, I did five films in 1935 and eight films in 1936 and seven films in 1937.

**SS:** Were they long shooting schedules? Were they rushed?

**TB:** It depended. Sometimes I'd have two going at once, and that was embarrassing.

**SS:** So you'd film two motion pictures at the same time?

**TB:** I couldn't be in two places at one time, but the company insisted that I be wherever it was that they wanted me. It was pretty awkward.

**SS:** *CHARLIE CHAN AT THE OPERA* is famous not only for being a Chan film but also for having Boris Karloff in it. What was it like to work with Karloff?

**TB:** It was very nice. Boris Karloff was a very nice man.

**SS:** Another famous co-star was Shirley Temple, in *HEIDI*. Is it true what they say about working with child actors? Is it all that difficult?

**TB:** Well, I'll tell you about *HEIDI*. Shirley was beginning to grow, then, and they were trying to make her look small. One of the things they did to make Shirley look small was to have us carry her around a lot. I'd pick her up and carry her, and she used to kick me in the

crotch. And that was painful! So I got to thinking, and I went to a friend of mine, Michael Whalen, who had been in a Shirley Temple picture. I said, "What do you do about that?" And he said, "Oh, very simple. Just drop her." So I did. She sat on the ground and looked at me, and shook her head, and that was that. She didn't kick me anymore.

**SS:** In 1937 you made two *Mr. Moto* movies, based on a series of spy novels by John P. Marquand. Were they made back-to-back?

**TB:** Well, they were both made in '37, but that's all I remember. I wasn't making them both at the same time.

**SS:** In *THINK FAST, MR. MOTO*, you've considerably more to do in terms of characterization. You play a drinker in that one, a bit of a playboy...

**TB:** Virginia Fields was in that one. She was a good friend of mine; we had quite a lot of fun.

**SS:** How rapidly were the *Mr. Moto* films turned out?

**TB:** I don't know, really. It varied depending on the problems faced in production. If you had to do a lot of stuff away from the studio, it took longer.

**SS:** The *Moto* films had lots more action than the Chans. You mentioned jumping off the boat and being shot at...

**TB:** And racing in cars. There was a lot of that in the *Moto* films.

**SS:** You made a mystery called *THE THIRTEENTH CHAIR*.

**TB:** Yes. I made *THE THIRTEENTH CHAIR* at Metro Goldwyn Mayer, and it starred Dame May Whitty. She played a medium. She'd have people sitting around and the thirteenth chair was occupied by somebody who turned out to be a murderer. It had a lot of MGM people in it.







**ABOVE:** On location in the California mountains for 1937's *HEIDI*, a tranquil Thomas Beck takes a breather between shots. **INSET:** Shirley Temple, who abandoned the *Good Ship Lollipop* for a quick chorus of "I Get a Kick Out of You." **PREVIOUS PAGE:** Handsome Thomas Beck only has eyes for the lovely Helen Wood in 1936's *CHARLIE CHAN AT THE RACE TRACK*.

**SS:** Was this after you left 20th Century Fox, or were you loaned to MGM?

**TB:** It was 1937, so I was loaned to them for that. So that's one more picture for that year! Eight pictures for 1937!

**SS:** What a grueling schedule! As you said, you went out there to rest and you never got to the beach!

**TB:** You know, I did *THE FAMILY NEXT DOOR* at Universal in 1939. Hugh Herbert was in it. And at Republic, I made a film called *I STAND ACCUSED*.

**SS:** Was that a mystery, too?

**TB:** I don't really remember. It really didn't mean very much to me. But it was the last film I made.

**SS:** That's the last one? We had one more title listed, a film called *ROAD DEMON*.

**TB:** Yes! There's another reason I left! In *ROAD DEMON*, I was a race-car driver, and I wasn't the race-car-driver type. As a matter of fact, I even changed my accent to a less-sophisticated style of speaking.

**SS:** You weren't happy about being cast in *ROAD DEMON*?

**TB:** I wasn't asked if I'd like to be in it, that's for sure!

**SS:** Did you take everything that they assigned you to play? Was there anything you ever refused?

**TB:** No.

**SS:** What was it like to make feature films in the 30s?

**TB:** Oh, very much like being in the theatre. What happened to me was, when Zanuck took over at Fox, he didn't take me over. (Laughs) Things started to get dull. You see, Zanuck had his own favorites and they came with him. They were all about my age and had my capabilities: Tyrone Power, Henry Fonda . . .

**SS:** Tyrone Power was certainly a favorite, from what you've told us!

**TB:** What happened, really, was that things got too bad at the studio. For instance, I was on vacation in New York and I met

Katharine Hepburn. She was getting set to star in *THE PHILADELPHIA STORY* on Broadway. She and I had made screen tests at Fox at the same time; that's how I met her. Anyway, she was getting ready for this play and I went around to see her. She offered me the part of her brother.

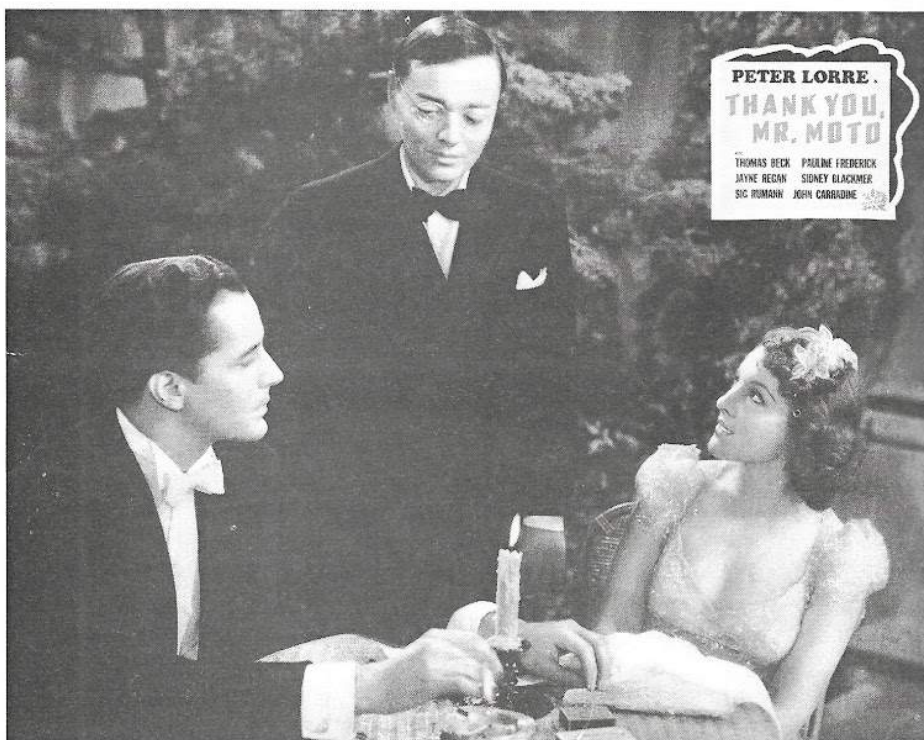
**SS:** That's the character who was eliminated from the 1940 screen version.

**TB:** I was very excited about doing it, so I called the studio to ask if they would give me permission, and they said, "Get back here as fast as you can. We've got something for you to do here." So I had to apologize and say, "No thanks," and rush back out there and do nothing for six months.

**SS:** They just didn't want you to take any other jobs.

**TB:** Right. Towards the end they were doing very bad casting, so I decided I had to make a change. The time was coming up for contract renewal, and I told my agent I was





*A romantic, candle-lit encounter between Thomas Beck and Pauline Frederick is interrupted by Peter Lorre as the unflappable Mr. Moto. Thank you, indeed!*

going up to Carmel to visit some friends. I said, "What I want you to do is tell them that, if they will double my salary, I will re-sign." Because they'd been cutting my salary for several years. Of course, they didn't do it, so when I came back I was free. On the advice of my agent, I spent another year out there working independently, made several films, and then I went back to the theatre. I got back on Broadway and, all of a sudden: World War Two. I was in for five years; I went in as a private and came out as a major.

**SS:** Then what happened?

**TB:** I went back to the theatre. Meanwhile, color films had come and television had come, and it was knocking the hell out of the theatre. There wasn't enough to keep everyone busy, so I got a job in a department store as a floor manager. A friend of mine who had his own advertising business found out about it and called to have lunch with me. He said he'd never known anyone in show business to have left it like that, and I said, "Well, now you do." He said, "How about coming to work

for me? I'll double your salary to start." I said, "You got it." (Laughs) I'd been in the theatre for 17 years and I went into the advertising business. I was the creative director and director of research for another 17 years.

**SS:** So you wound up with two careers of equal length.

**TB:** Well, I got tired of commuting. My friend who had owned the business had died. I thought, "What the hell! I might as well resign. I've been 34 years working like a dog." I stayed in Connecticut. I stopped commuting, of course, and got bored. So, I opened my own real estate business and I had my own business in Connecticut for 12 years.

**SS:** So, you've had three careers!

**TB:** I finally retired and moved down to Key West. Lived there for a couple of years, came up to Miami, lived there for a few years, went up to Stewart, then came back to Miami and here I am. Still retired.

**SS:** Don't want a fourth career, huh?

**TB:** No. I don't think I'm bright enough anymore. (Laughs)

**SS:** When you came out of the service, did you ever consider going back to Hollywood and resuming your film career?

**TB:** No. I didn't. I'd had enough.

**SS:** Was filmmaking a happier experience before Fox merged with 20th Century?

**TB:** Well, it was different, that's for sure. They were very nice people that I worked with—Warner Oland, Lew Ayres, and Pat Paterson, *LIFE BEGINS AT FORTY* with Will Rogers and Richard Cromwell, *MUSIC IS MAGIC* with Alice Faye...

**SS:** Good people, certainly. Well, we'll be telling everybody your Shirley Temple anecdote; we'll be dining out on that.

**TB:** And she's an ambassador today.

**SS:** Maybe that's how she got the job.

**TB:** (Laughs) But not from me!



**LEFT:** Good guys Beck, Frederick, and Lorre are menaced by bad guy Sidney Blackmer and gang in 1937's *THANK YOU, MR. MOTO*. **RIGHT:** Thomas Beck was far from happy at being cast in 1938's *ROAD DEMON*, a "Sports Adventure" in which he played a character far removed from the dinner-jacketed sophisticates of his Chan and Moto movies.



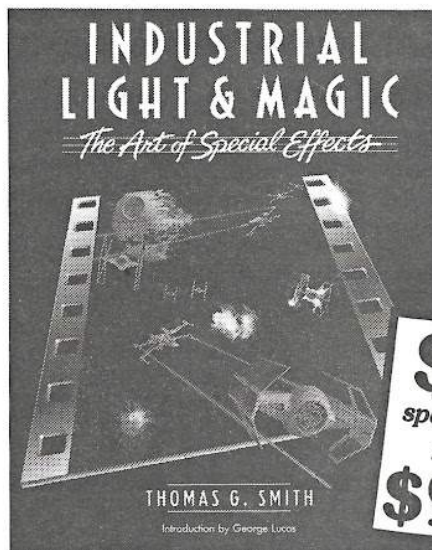
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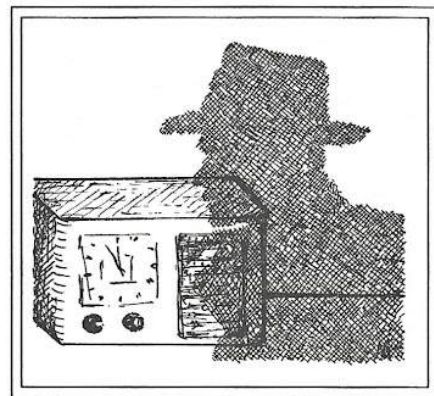
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# BY RADIO

BY BILL PALMER



... a train whistles through the night ... "The Mutual Broadcasting System presents I LOVE A MYSTERY" ... the haunting organ music of "Valse Triste" by Sibelius plays as a distant siren shrieks ... "A new Carleton Morse adventure thriller" ... a clock slowly, ominously strikes the hour ...

Written and created by Carlton E. Morse, who also produced ONE MAN'S FAMILY for radio, I LOVE A MYSTERY was originally broadcast from Hollywood. The show ran from January 16, 1939, until December 31, 1944, and featured the adventures of three soldiers-of-fortune: Jack Packard, Doc Long, and Reggie York, played, respectively, by Michael Raffetto, Barton Yarborough, and Walter Patterson. The 15-minute/Monday-through-Friday format changed to a half-hour show aired on Mondays, then back to a five-times-weekly serial when the series switched from NBC to CBS. After a five-year hiatus, I LOVE A MYSTERY moved to the Mutual Network in New York in 1949, as a daily 15-minute program with a different cast. Jack was played by Russell Thorson, Doc by Jim Boles, and Reggie by Tony Randall. The 46 stories performed by the new cast included scripts written for the original series. The last show was broadcast on December 26, 1952.

In the original series, the three adventurers met while helping the Chinese fight the Japanese invaders. Surrounded by the enemy, they named themselves "The Three Comrades" and agreed to meet (if they survived) in a certain San Francisco bar the following New Year's Eve. Jack, a natural-born leader possessed of an acutely analytical mind; Doc, a womanizing Texan with a love of danger and the skill to open any lock; and Reggie, an enormously strong Englishman, banded together to roam the world searching for adventure and mystery. Later they opened the A-1 Detective Agency—"just off Hollywood Boulevard and one flight up"—with beautiful secretary Gerry Booker (played by Gloria Blondell, Joan's sister). The agency's motto was "No job too tough, no mystery too baffling."

## Nina Foch and friends in 1945's I LOVE A MYSTERY



Jack, the central character who had a deep distrust of "women who got themselves into trouble," was balanced by Doc, who never failed to make a pass at every beautiful girl who came along. (And they were all beautiful. And usually deadly.) Reggie was rather in the middle: appreciative, but laid-back.

The stories were small masterpieces of suspense and edge-of-the-chair cliff-hangers that matched their lurid titles: THE FEAR THAT CREEPS LIKE A CAT, TERROR OF FROZEN-CORPSE LODGE, THE BLUE PHANTOM MURDERS, and THE PIRATE LOOT OF THE ISLAND OF SKULLS.

In the 15-minute, 15-episode serial THE THING THAT CRIES IN THE NIGHT, the three comrades are about to spend the \$25,000 reward money they received in their last adventure when they are asked by Grandma Martin to stay at her eerie ancestral mansion. Grandma wants them to find the maniac who is trying to kill her granddaughters, Faith, Hope, and Charity. Before Jack can refuse, he meets a semi-nude Hope, who tells him that her lover, the chauffeur, has just been murdered, and learns that Faith is being blackmailed. Doc finds Charity (or Cherry as she's called) tied up and about to be tossed into a roaring furnace. Cherry tells the comrades that she has been repeatedly slashed on her arms and legs with a razor and pushed down the stairs by someone or something living in the old house, and that before each attack there is the sound of a baby crying. Asked to describe her attacker, she says, "He was all in black, and didn't seem to have any legs or face!"

In THE RICHARDS CURSE, woman-hating Jack becomes engaged to rich girl Sunny Richards, who seems fated to bring disaster to any man who befriends her.

Sunny also appears in one of the most popular I LOVE A MYSTERY shows, TEMPLE OF THE VAMPIRES, in which the boys battle Manuel, the high-flying high priest of the vampires, who wants Sunny as his new priestess.

In BURY YOUR DEAD, ARIZONA, our stalwart heroes encounter the fat Maestro, a magician who is turning his beautiful (natch) assistant into a werewolf in order to terrorize the town of Bury Your Dead.

I LOVE A MYSTERY was brought to the silver screen in 1945, when Columbia released the first of three movies based on the series. Simply titled I LOVE A MYSTERY, it starred Jim Bannon as Jack and Barton Yarborough (repeating his radio role) as Doc. The character of Reggie was dropped. The script was based on the radio episode THE DECAPITATION OF JEFFERSON MONK. The second film, THE DEVIL'S MASK, was released in 1946 and co-starred Anita Louise. The last feature, THE UNKNOWN, was loosely based on THE THING THAT CRIES IN THE NIGHT. The script was again reworked into a dreadful, campy television movie, released in 1973, called I LOVE A MYSTERY, starring Les Crane as Jack, David Hartman as Doc, and Hagen Beggs as Reggie. Ida Lupino co-starred as the femme fatale.

Jack, Doc, and Reggie also appeared in 13 half-hour radio shows, from April 25, 1948, to July 18, 1948, collectively called I LOVE ADVENTURE.

*Originally published in Mystery Scene Magazine*



## I LOVE A MYSTERY

Battle of the Century (Jan. 30, 1950), Blood of the Cat (Apr. 12, 1943), Blood on the Border (Oct. 23, 1950), Bride of the Were Wolf (Sept. 19, 1944), Brooks Kidnapping (July 19, 1951), Bury Your Dead, Arizona (Dec. 11, 1939), Case of the Roxy Mob (Jan. 16, 1939) Corpse in Compartment C (June 5, 1944), Eight Kinds of Murder (May 12, 1941), Escapade of the Desert Hog (Oct. 2, 1950), I Am the Destroyer of Women (Apr. 24, 1944), Incident Concerning Death (Nov. 29, 1950), Murder in Turquoise Pass (Aug. 21, 1950), Murder Is the Word for It (June 9, 1943), Murder on February Island (Mar. 10, 1941), My Beloved Is a Vampire (Oct. 4, 1943), Secret Passage to Death (Dec. 1, 1941), Stairway to the Sun (June 7, 1943), Temple of Vampires (Aug. 22, 1944), Terror of Frozen-Corpse Lodge (Feb. 9, 1942), The Blue Phantom Murders (Oct. 2, 1939), The Case of the Nevada Man Killer (Mar. 31, 1950), The Case of the Terrified Comedian (Oct. 18, 1951), Find Elsa Holberg, Dead or Alive (Dec. 11, 1952), The Case of the Transplanted Castle (Jan. 6, 1941), The Deadly Sin of Sir Richard Coyle (Dec. 6, 1943), The Decapitation of Jefferson Monk (Aug. 30, 1943), The Fear that Creeps Like a Cat (Oct. 23, 1939), The Girl in the Gilded Cage (Mar. 22, 1943), The Graves of Whamperjaw, Texas (July 19, 1943), The Hermit of San Felipe, Atapabo (Nov. 8, 1943), The Killer of the Circle M (May 10, 1943), The Man Who Hated to Shave (Aug. 8, 1944), The Monster in the Mansion (Oct. 16, 1944), The Pirate Loot of the Island of Skulls (Apr. 13, 1942), The Richards Curse (Dec. 12, 1949), The Snake with Diamond Eyes (June 23, 1950), The Thing that Cries in the Night (Nov. 20, 1939), The Thing that Wouldn't Die (June 12, 1944), The Tropics Don't Call It Murder (Sept. 30, 1940), The Turn of the Wheel (May 1940), The Twenty Traitors of Timbucktoo (Jan. 10, 1944), Trouble At Sea (Nov. 13, 1950), Whose Body Got Buried? (Sept. 11, 1950), Widow with the Amputation (Mar. 1944)



Ida Lupino (CENTER) starred with Jack Weston and several severely over-coiffed starlets in a misguided television of *I LOVE A MYSTERY* in 1973.

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# VOICES OF DOOM BY BENNET POMERANTZ

Photo by Ralph Nelson

Shortly before this issue went to press, the Lord of the Undead, Count Dracula, rose again in movie theatres across the country. To herald the Count's return, audiobook publishers flooded the marketplace with Dracula and vampire audios, all in time for the Christmas buying frenzy.

Buckingham Classics may be a small publishing house, but the dramatic performance of their *Dracula* audio is on a par with major publishers. This four-and-one-half-hour abridgement recounts the tale in the Gothic-prose manner of Bram Stoker's original masterpiece. Studio narrator Stan Winiarski brings special insight to the demeanor of the Count and makes this audio presentation enlightening as well as engrossing.

Dove Audio's version of the Dracula legend (*Dracula*) is read by actor Edward Woodward, whose flawless performance is marred only by the weakly-scripted abridgement of this classic novel. The Dove abridgement seems to have modernized Stoker's prose for the masses. Still, with Woodward's marvelous and outstanding acting ability, this audio is certainly worth a listen.

Donald Pickering takes a stab at the Count in Durkin Hayes Audio's collection *Classic Tales of Horror*. This version, abridged as it is, is a fine illustration of what can be done on audio within a short time span (90 minutes). Pickering's straightforward narration is engaging, but it craves a certain something to make this audio book a complete success. Though I have listened to this piece three times, I haven't yet put a finger on what is missing or needed . . . if you find it, please let me know. Also in this collection is John Hurt's exceptional narration of *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. *Dracula* will also be one of the premier titles of Durkin Hayes' Paperback Audio collection—single-tape stories available at very low prices.

Harper Audio has voyaged into their old Caedmon Imprint vaults to reissue their classic *Dracula* from 1968. Caedmon Audio has always been a label of prestige, and this title is no exception. David McCallum (of THE MAN FROM U.N.C.L.E.) and Carole Shelley perform an audio duet, reading excerpts of the classic tale as if it were Shakespeare. When the piece was originally released, it was amazing to listen as these young talents brought such blood-red passion to the audio medium. Today this audio chestnut is, by anyone's standards, a true classic to be enjoyed and savored.

For the avid bloodsucker, Simon & Schuster Audio's collection *Prime Evil: A Taste For Blood* is a smorgasbord for the ears. These three blood-curdling yarns, all read by Ed Begley, Jr., are a treat. This audio collection has a superb, contemporary vampire tale, "The Night Flier," written by the modern-day master of horror (and horror audios), Stephen King, which in itself is worth your seeking out this audio book.

Anne Rice, the current mistress of fear, has her Vampire Chronicles available from Random House Audio. In *Interview with*

**Bennett Pomerantz is a regular contributor to Mystery Scene and Strange New Worlds. This column was originally printed in Strange New Worlds.**

*the Vampire*, F. Murray Abraham catches the audience off-guard with a hypnotizing three-hour abridgement of the novel. Abraham brings a dramatic exuberance to his reading, captivating the listener as a true vampire would. In *The Vampire Lestat*, Michael York takes a more gentle narrative style. York verbally paints Lestat as a victim of his own life style. The actor has a wider audio canvas to work with; he makes Lestat more romantic and full of yearning, and not just a bloodsucking beast of the night. The third book, *The Queen of the Damned*, relates the tale of Akasha, the first vampire. It is interpreted by actress Kate Nelligan, whose silken voice (like that of the classic Siren of myth) lures the listener into the narrative. David Purdham provides the voice of Lestat. *The Tale of the Body Thief*, the current book in Anne Rice's Vampire Chronicles, is read by Richard E. Grant, who brings a powerful presence to the tale. Listeners will be mesmerized, amazed, and completely enchanted by this audio . . . enough said!

Take a female hematologist who discovers an abandoned miracle baby with a unique immune system and a need for bi-weekly transfusions of blood, and you have the beginning of Dan Simmons' *Children of the Night* from Brilliance Corporation. This 12-hour unabridged audio book follows the baby as it is kidnapped by the Romanian Underground and taken to (if you haven't guessed yet) Transylvania. Buy it. This audio mixes contemporary problems, such as AIDS, with modern vampires. Narrator George Ralph makes this 12-hour audio fly by as if it were only two hours.

One for the kiddies: *Dracula*, a Step Up Classic Chiller from Random House Audio, is a children's audio whose text talks down to its audience. Its saving grace is the multicast production and unique radio-style format, which might make this book-and-audio package interesting for young people.

A master of the horror-film genre, Vincent Price, has a BBC Audio collection of four dramatizations of small, unknown horror tales, collectively called *The Price of Fear* (available through the Mind's Eye audio catalogue). There are two very special stories: Bram Stoker's "Cat's Cradle" and Stanley Ellin's quasi-vampire saga "Specialty of the House." Price is in top macabre form in these frightening dramas.

The newest *Dracula* audio novel, released in late October, comes from Penguin Highbridge Audio. Richard E. Grant (who appears in Coppola's *Dracula* film as Doctor Seward) renders this audio version in the best Gothic verbal technique. Grant has the style of Edward Woodward, the powerful presence of Anthony Hopkins, and the hypnotic power of F. Murray Abraham wrapped in one neat package. The pace is straightforward. Never lulling you to sleep, it keeps you breathlessly waiting for each syllable.

Bantam Audio's BBC radio version of *Dracula*, read by Robert Powell, was unavailable for preview.

As I close the lid on the coffin of vampire audios, I suddenly feel two pin pricks on my neck. I brush aside thoughts of the undead; obviously mosquitoes are biting large this year . . .

Or are they?



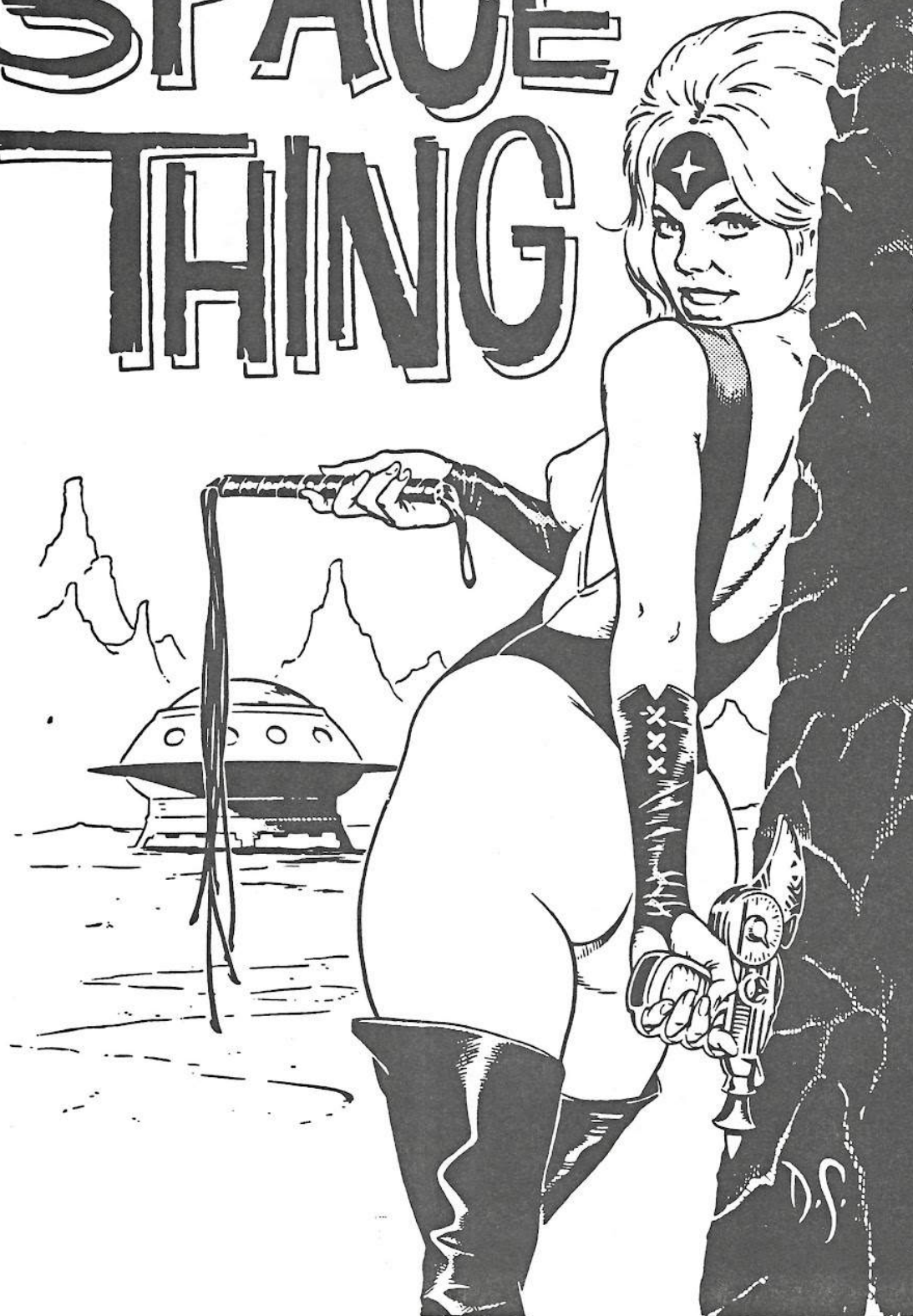
Gary Oldman as Dracula





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# Better Holmes and Watson

## The Granada Series Reviewed

### THE GREEK INTERPRETER

Adaptation: Derek Marlowe

Direction: Alan Grint

A well-dressed, soft-spoken eccentric of great girth and even greater intellect; dry-witted; not given to venturing forth or veering from his self-assigned sphere of autocratic influence; able to pierce the veil of the most vexing mysteries if only he could rouse himself from his lethargy—who can this be but Nero Wolfe, the barely-six-feet-tall, seventh-of-a-ton emperor of New York's West 35th Street and Rex Stout's classic detective stories?

The answer to that question is simplicity itself, provided one is willing to invade the hushed confines of a certain building in the Victorian London of the late 19th century. Let Sherlock Holmes explain:

The Diogenes Club is the queerest club in London, and Mycroft one of the queerest men. He's always there from quarter to five to twenty to eight. It's six now, so if you care for a stroll this beautiful evening I shall be very happy to introduce you to two curiosities.

Thus Sir Arthur Conan Doyle introduced his audience (and Dr. John H. Watson) to Mr. Mycroft Holmes, elder brother and intellectual better of the world's greatest detective, in "The Greek Interpreter," a short story published in the September 1893 issue of *The Strand Magazine* and in hardcover that same year as part of *The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes*. One of Conan Doyle's happiest inspirations, Mycroft was used far too sparingly by the author, taking the stage in only one additional tale (1908's "The Bruce-Partington Plans") and being referred to in several others (including 1893's "The Final Problem," in which the portly politico expended just enough energy to help his brother escape—temporarily—the clutches of Professor Moriarty, and 1903's "The Adventure of the Empty House," marking Sherlock's return from a self-imposed exile known only to Mycroft).

If the author was less than generous with the Diogenes Club's most famous member, followers in the footsteps of Conan Doyle have been more so. H. F. Heard fashioned three entertaining mysteries (1941's *A Taste for Honey*, 1942's *Reply Paid*, and 1949's *The Notched Hairpin*) featuring the enigmatic Mr. Mycroft, a Sussex bee keeper, but it is clearly implied that this is not My-



Jeremy Brett

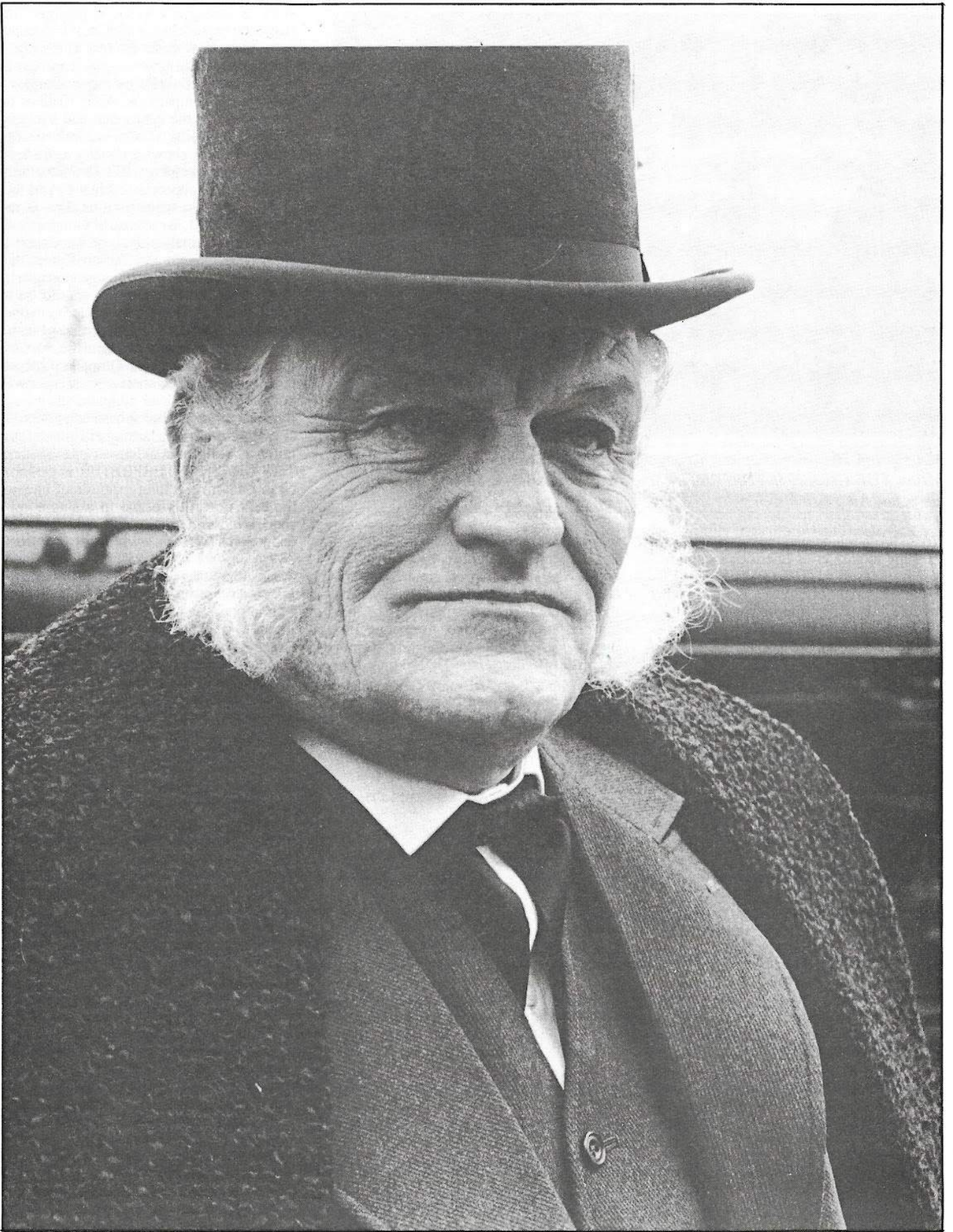
croft himself, but Sherlock in retirement, using his brother's name as a *nom de guerre*. Mycroft did manage a personal appearance in Nicholas Meyer's *The Seven-Per-Cent Solution* (1974), figuring prominently in the early chapters as he and Watson trick Sherlock into taking the cure with Sigmund Freud. Nineteen seventy-nine's *Enter the Lion*, by Michael P. Hodel and Sean M. Wright, brought Mycroft to the fore in an adventure concerning a dastardly plot to overthrow the American government and restore British rule. M. J. Trow's *Lestrade and the Hallowed House*, one of a series of amusing (if mean-spirited) revisionist mysteries in which the hopelessly drug-addled Sherlock died attempting to kill Watson at the Reichenbach Falls, leaving the crime-solving field to Scotland Yard's masterful Inspector Lestrade, had Mycroft on hand to further sully the reputation of the Holmes family. Recently, Edward B. Hanna's disappointing *The Whitechapel Horrors* presented readers with a Machiavellian Mycroft quite capable of provoking a political assassination for love of Queen and country.

In performance, Lewis Gilbert appeared as Mycroft in 1922's *THE BRUCE-PARTINGTON PLANS*, one of a series of British film adaptations with Eille Norwood as Sherlock. The Master Sleuth's older sibling went unmentioned in the 14 Fox and Universal features starring Basil Rathbone and Nigel Bruce as Holmes and Watson, but turned up sporadically on the Rathbone/Bruce radio mysteries aired during the same period (1939 through 1946, after which Bruce continued for a season with Tom Conway as Holmes). British television first saw Mycroft in the person of Derek Francis in a 1965 series starring Douglas Wilmer (the show marking his appearance was *THE BRUCE-PARTINGTON PLANS*);



ABOVE: Pictured in all his reflected glory is Jeremy Brett in a scene from *THE GREEK INTERPRETER*, directed by Derek Marlowe. NEXT PAGE: Charles Gray as Mycroft, Sherlock Holmes' smarter brother. The actor had previously played the role in 1976's *THE SEVEN PERCENT SOLUTION*.









*Mr. Mycroft Holmes introduces his younger brother Sherlock and Dr. Watson to Mr. Melas, THE GREEK INTERPRETER. Pictured: David Burke, Jeremy Brett, Charles Gray, and Alkis Kritikos.*

Ronald Adam inherited the role when Peter Cushing took over as Sherlock for the following season's *THE GREEK INTERPRETER*. On the big screen, Robert Morley made a comically apoplectic Mycroft in 1965's *A STUDY IN TERROR*, and Christopher Lee scored an un-Canonically thin hit in 1970's *THE PRIVATE LIFE OF SHERLOCK HOLMES*. (Two decades later, Lee played brother Sherlock in the Harmony Gold miniseries *SHERLOCK HOLMES: INCIDENT AT VICTORIA FALLS* and *SHERLOCK HOLMES AND THE LEADING LADY*, both featuring an unattractively waspish Mycroft played by Jerome Willis.) In 1976, *THE SEVEN PERCENT SOLUTION* (adapted by Nicholas Meyer from his best-selling novel) gave the suitably corpulent Charles Gray an opportunity to shine in the role. Not surprisingly, it was to this actor that Granada turned when, in 1985, they presented a charming and exciting production of *THE GREEK INTERPRETER*.

\*\*\*

Mr. Melas (Alkis Kritikos) has brought a problem to his neighbor, Mycroft Holmes. Engaged as an interpreter of Greek, Melas was blindfolded and transported by the menacing Wilson Kemp (George Costigan) to a lonely house wherein resided a solitary prisoner: Paul Kratides (Anton Alexander). There, Melas was forced to translate the demands of the prisoner's captors into Kratides' native tongue. (Specifically, Kemp insisted that Kratides put his signature to a mysterious document.) Promised a swift death if he breathed a word of what he'd seen, Melas

was returned to London, where, disregarding the threats on his life, he quickly consulted Sherlock Holmes' smarter brother. Mycroft being Mycroft, he naturally hands the problem over to the energetic Sherlock, but musters enough vigor to venture from the Diogenes Club for the grand finale aboard a speeding train. Before that, however, we are treated to Conan Doyle's classic example of sibling rivalry, as Sherlock and Mycroft glance at the street below a club window and play a game of deductive one-upmanship:

*Sherlock:* An old soldier, I perceive.

*Mycroft:* And very recently discharged.

*Sherlock:* Served in India, I see.

*Mycroft:* As a non-commissioned officer.

*Sherlock:* Royal Artillery, I fancy.

*Mycroft:* And a widower.

*Sherlock:* With a child.

*Mycroft:* Children, my dear boy. Children.

The indulgent, gently condescending tone in which Charles Gray utters that final "Children" is enough to make *THE GREEK INTERPRETER* required viewing for all Sherlockians and Holmesians (and mere lovers of good acting). Gray is given more to do here than in the later (but still top-notch) *THE BRUCE-PARTINGTON PLANS*, and makes every line and gesture count. Still, he is not working in a vacuum. The underlying affection between the Holmes boys, rarely displayed in earlier interpretations, is largely revealed through Jeremy Brett's subtle facial expres-

sions as young Sherlock. As always with Brett, the personality of his Great Detective holds at least as much interest as the mystery itself. David Burke acquits himself well as a Watson bedazzled by the mental dexterity of his companions. Alkis Kritikos is sympathetic as the interpreter, and Victoria Harwood chilling as the victim's sister. Oliver Maguire shows up briefly as Inspector Tobias Gregson; it's the Scotland Yard's sole appearance (thus far) in the Granada series, whose major flaw is its occasional (and, in the case of Gregson and Lestrade, criminal) misuse of the Canon's supporting players. As Wilson Kemp, the chief villain of the piece, George Costigan is a sly, giggling menace and should be a prime candidate for the lead role if anyone ever films the life of Peter Lorre.

There has been fear on the part of die-hard Canonites that Granada's recent decision to film the short stories at a two-hour length will lead adapters far astray from the originals, but slavish adherence to tales that sometimes lack a final punch is as much a fault as reckless improvisation. *THE GREEK INTERPRETER* is perhaps Granada's most telling example of having the best of both worlds. In a single episode, we have the Diogenes Club game of deduction lifted almost word-for-word from *The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes*, and the thrilling train sequence, with its delightful cat-and-mouse dinner scene between Mycroft and Kemp—a sequence that is nowhere to be found in Conan Doyle's story. Granada could do worse than look to its own laurels—in particular, to *THE GREEK INTERPRETER*—for inspiration.

—Richard Valley



*No, it isn't the mysterious Mr. Moto; it's the murderous Mr. Wilson Kemp (played by George Costigan).*



## POIROT INVESTIGATES

# THE MYSTERIOUS AFFAIR AT STYLES

One evening in 1916, while World War One raged on, two women—sisters—sat together discussing the famous thriller *The Mystery of the Yellow Room* by Gaston Leroux. (Leroux also penned the classic *The Phantom of the Opera*.) Spurred on by the conversation, the older sibling dared the younger to try her hand at writing a mystery whose culprit the older sister couldn't guess. The challenge was accepted, the story written, sent off, and rejected by six publishing houses before finally being printed in February of 1921. The book: *The Mysterious Affair at Styles*. Its author: a 30-year-old unknown named Agatha Christie.

Christie later pointed out in *An Autobiography* (1977) that she never intended to use her real name.

I had wanted to write my books under a fancy name—Martin West or Mostyn Grey—but John Lane [her publisher] had been insistent on keeping my own name... particularly the Christian name: he said, "Agatha is an unusual name which remains in people's memories." So I had to abandon Martin West and label myself henceforth as Agatha Christie.

*Styles* was conceived while Christie worked in the dispensary of a local hospital. Years later, she explained its planning:

Since I was surrounded by poisons, perhaps it was natural that death by poisoning should be the method I selected... I toyed with the idea, liked it, and finally selected it. Then I went on to the dramatis personae. Who should be poisoned? Who would poison him or her? When? Where? How? Why?

Then, of course, there had to be a detective. And there would be—the Belgian sleuth, Hercule Poirot.

Christie was never quite sure where or how she invented Poirot. Torquay, Christie's home in Devon, England, was filled with Belgian refugees from the war. "A Belgian came into my head. It was as simple as that," she stated. Poirot evolved into the celebrated character who was to be the author's mainstay for the next 56 years. He stars in 33 of Christie's novels and 52 short stories. His appearance and mannerisms are now part of literary folklore—a small man with a brilliant mind, who speaks in fractured English, has a pas-

sion for order and neatness, and has a signature moustache.

Created in the shadow of the legendary Sherlock Holmes, Poirot had stiff competition. Most readers forget that, at the beginning, Christie's and Conan Doyle's careers overlapped. What Sir Arthur may have thought of the fledgling writer has never been noted, but Christie was a devout follower of Holmes and his adventures. Conan Doyle's influence is evident in *Styles*. Just as Holmes has his Watson, Poirot has his faithful sidekick, Arthur Hastings. Christie also gives us Inspector James Japp of Scotland Yard, a "brother" to Conan Doyle's Lestrade.

The basic plot devices of *Styles* quickly became a staple of the author's work: a large country estate, a baffling murder (usually by poison), a cast of diverse characters (all with appropriate motives), and, most important of all, stunning use of misdirection. Even in this, her very first book, Agatha Christie had a cunning hand. Critic Sutherland Scott described *Styles* as "one of the finest firsts ever written."

Christie's own favorite review appeared not in any literary magazine, but in the *Pharmaceutical Journal*, which praised "this detective story for dealing with poisons in a knowledgeable way, and not with the nonsense about untraceable substances that so often happens. Miss Agatha Christie knows her job."

In 1990, to celebrate Dame Agatha Christie's centenary, London Weekend Television produced a screen version of her

première tale as part of its acclaimed POIROT series. David Suchet once again assayed the role of the detective, with Hugh Fraser as Hastings.

Unlike previous episodes, the program, written by Clive Exton and directed by Ross Devenish, had to look and feel completely different from the "regular" Poirot shows, which take place in the mid-1930s. Since *The Mysterious Affair at Styles* is firmly set in the summer of 1917, the costumes, sets, cars, and even the actors themselves had to be altered. Suchet and Fraser were required to play their characters as almost two decades younger than they normally were portrayed. All these elements combined to create a world beautifully evocative of England during World War One. Only the opening credit sequence remained the same, with its dazzling animated Art Deco graphics.

*Styles* stars Gillian Barge as murder victim Emily Inglethorp, and Beatie Edney, David Rintoul, Michael Cronin, Joanna McCallum, Anthony Calf, and Allie Byrne as the circle of suspects. Philip Jackson also makes an appearance as a youthful Inspector Japp.

So sit back, relax, and match wits with Agatha Christie in *The Mysterious Affair at Styles*. Follow the clues—a china coffee cup ground to powder, a carpet stain, a piece of green fabric, a fireplace lit in midsummer, and some spilt candle wax—and maybe, just maybe, you can discover the murderer before the incomparable Hercule Poirot.

—Scot D. Ryerson



In 1917, Captain Arthur Hastings meets Hercule Poirot for the first time.



# How to Make a Frankenstein Monster

by Michael R. Thomas

From the time I was eight years old until now, as a professional makeup man of 43, I've read quite a lot about makeup, but I've yet to read a sober discussion of Universal's classic Frankenstein Monster makeup that doesn't contain a few serious inaccuracies. Actually, some articles are more full of stuffing than a Thanksgiving turkey.

Makeup alchemist Jack P. Pierce, the man who "created" the Monster, died in 1968 and is not available for comment, so I'll attempt herein to analyze and re-create his procedure, relying mainly on interviews, with Pierce and others, and on what I can deduce from photos of Pierce at work. Only occasionally will I include whatever seemingly valid information I could glean from the Universal publicity department's extremely unreliable descriptions of the conception and execution of the makeup.

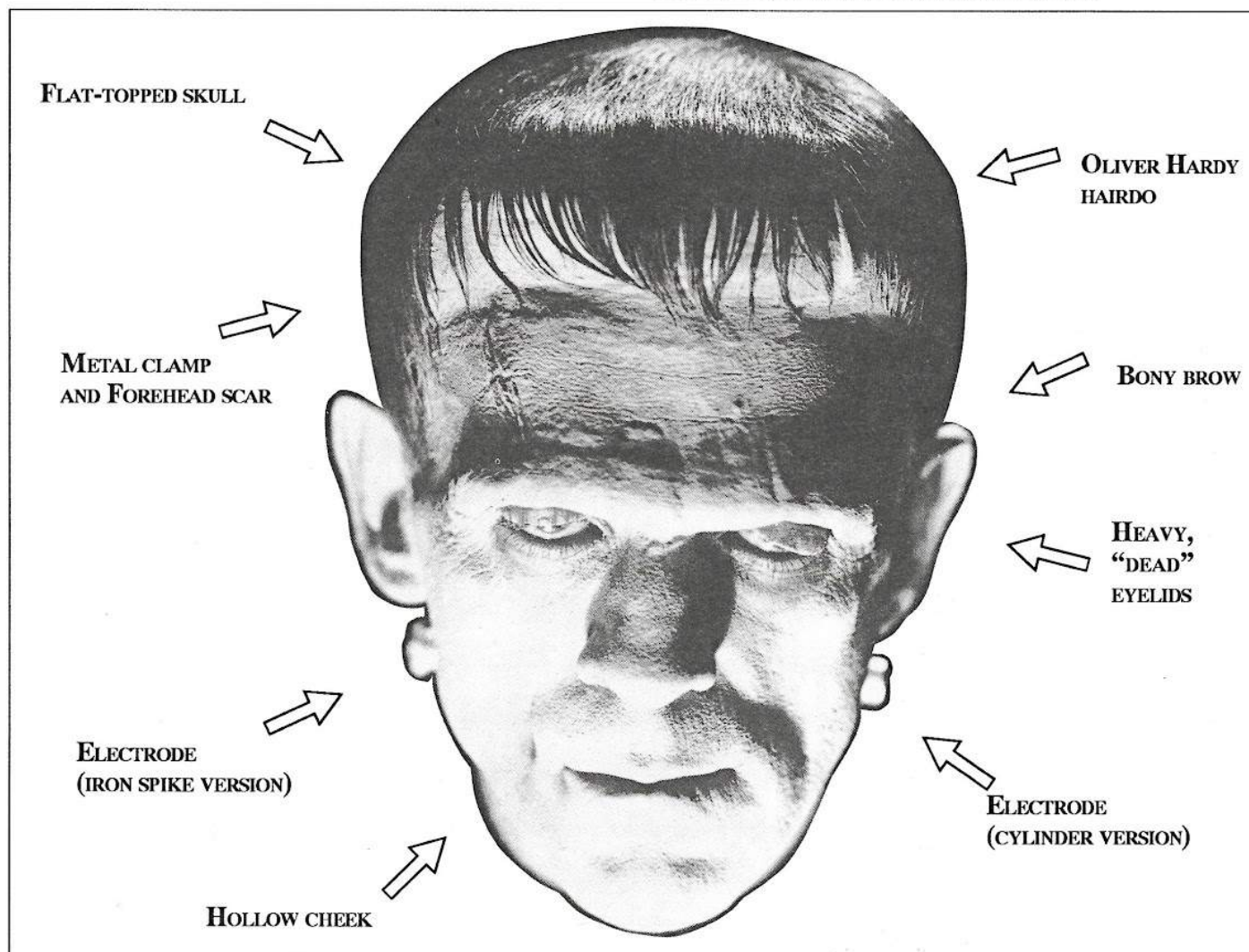
The inaccuracies seem to be the result of . . .

1. *Misunderstanding.* E.g., acetone, the main ingredient in nail-polish remover, was used to remove the makeup, not acids, as is often stated.

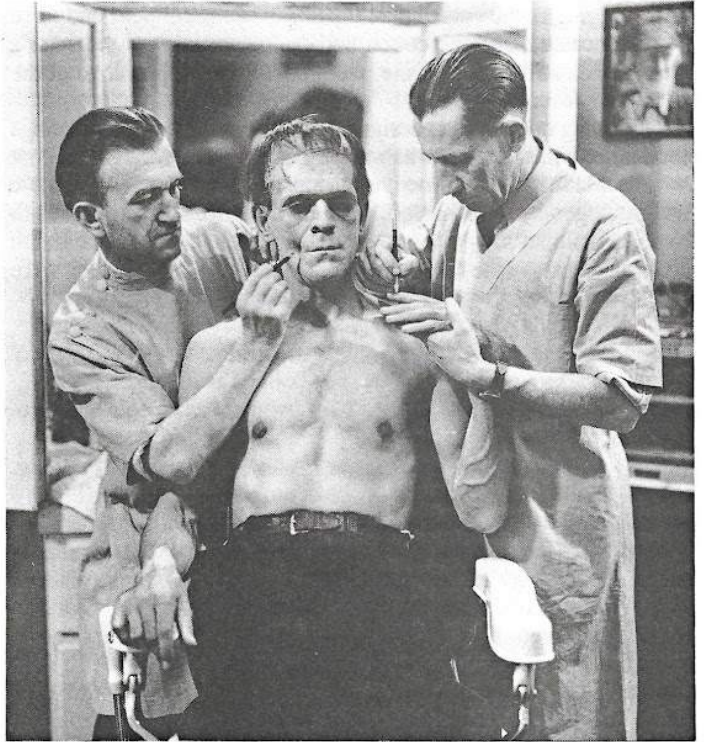
2. *Confusion of facts.* E.g., in his later years, Boris Karloff found back and leg braces a medical necessity. A few accounts claim that the braces were part of the costume and were the reason that the Monster walked so stiffly. (This, however, could also be a misunderstanding. The Monster's pants were held up by suspenders, but an Englishman such as Karloff might have referred to suspenders by their British name: braces.)

3. *Over-dramatization.* E.g., supposedly, Pierce studied ancient Egyptian burial practices and learned that the blood of bound, executed criminals eventually changed to water, which then ran to the cadaver's extremities, causing pronounced enlargement; hence the shortening of the Monster's jacket sleeves to make his hands look larger. (Pierce most likely did not study Egyptian burial rites until 1932's *THE MUMMY*.)

The credit for the Monster's design is usually given to Pierce, although various reports have mentioned suggestions and contributions made by Karloff and director James Whale.







**Makeup wizard Jack Pierce performs his magic (with the help of an assistant) on a star in the making: Boris Karloff. Pierce provided the body, Karloff the soul, for the all-time horror classic *FRANKENSTEIN* (1931).**

Starting at the top, then: That famous flat-topped skull is a hollow rubber headpiece. Experimenting on a clay miniature of Karloff's head, Pierce sculpted a representation of what a human skull might look like if the top were sawed off to remove the unusable brain and transplant a new one.

Like a pot lid, the skull top would be replaced and clamped down. The squared-off shape was actually a bit of artistic license. Although a ridge—even a thick ridge—might ring the top of the Monster's head after such modification, the extreme flattening of the skull was actually an unrealistic exaggeration. (Look at it this way: Slicing off the top of a hard-boiled egg to transplant the yolk wouldn't flatten the sliced-off piece.)

In an impressionistic/expressionistic way, Pierce dramatized the hand-made, mechanical quality of the Monster by turning the naturally ovoid human crown into a blunt cylinder. (In fact, the Monster's head is not simply cylindrical, but an interesting arrangement of planes and contours, much more rounded in 1931 than in the later films.)

Deciding upon the shape, Pierce sculpted the misshapen skull in clay on Karloff's life cast (a plaster duplicate of the actor's entire head, neck and shoulders, made in much the same way that a dentist duplicates a patient's teeth.)

Wet plaster was applied over the sculpted clay and allowed to harden, forming a "negative mold," which was then removed from the life cast. Next, liquid latex rubber was brushed into the plaster negative mold, layer by layer, reinforced with cheesecloth for rigidity, and allowed to dry. Then, the latex "shell-piece" was peeled out.

The resulting hollow rubber headpiece had the contours of Pierce's sculpting and, as it came from the actor's own life cast, when Pierce lowered it over Karloff's head, it fit snugly and accurately. The Monster began to take shape.

**Michael R. Thomas is a professional makeup artist and life-long horror fan. He has provided character makeup for *SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE* since its first season.**

The front of the rubber headpiece extended only slightly below Karloff's hairline on his forehead and covered the hairline at his temples and over his sideburns. The headpiece continued over and behind the actor's ears and down the sides of his neck, covering his hair completely and extending down the nape of his neck to be hidden beneath the Monster's coat collar.

The paper-thin edges of the headpiece were held down by spirit gum. Many accounts describe the headpiece as adding several inches to Karloff's height—he was a bit under six feet tall—but, in fact, the headpiece was not very thick on top and made him only about half an inch taller. The huge boots with their four-inch-thick soles were, more than any other factor, responsible for height.

The headpiece in 1931 had but one visible clamp (sculpted as part of the piece and painted silver) among the bangs above the Monster's left eye. On his forehead above the right eye was the vertical scar, looking as though stretching the skin too tightly over the enlarged skull had caused it to split. (One was never quite sure if that wasn't actually a glimpse of bone in there.)

Next, there is that eyebrowless bone ledge looming over the Monster's eyes. Although it does not represent any rational medical procedure, the ledge blocks out the eyebrows so vital to human facial expression and endows the Monster with a sinister reptilian quality.

Each day, Pierce applied spirit gum over Karloff's eyebrows and above the bridge of his nose. Pierce would then press on a thin layer of cotton wool and brush on a coating of flexible collodion, a substance resembling clear nail polish. Flexible collodion is highly flammable, smells strongly of banana oil, and burns the skin. It also dries very quickly, as its vehicle is ether, which is extremely volatile. (When the ether evaporates, it leaves behind a tough, flexible layer of cellulose.) Pierce added layer upon layer of collodion-soaked cotton, drying each application with a hand-held hair dryer, until a thickness of about one-quarter to one-third of an inch was attained over the brows. This blended with a slightly thinner application of cotton and collodion, beginning at the outer corners of the eye sockets, extending over the cheekbones,



and stopping at the ears. Thus, the edges of the rubber headpiece were concealed, and the cotton and collodian built up the actor's cheekbones and added to the overall skull-like appearance of the Monster's face.

During one makeup design session (these late-night meetings took place while Karloff was working on the 1931 film *GRAFT*) it was decided that, unadorned, the Monster's eyes looked too alive and intelligent. It was Karloff himself who gave Pierce the idea to apply mortician's wax to the actor's eyelids, creating the dead, lizard-like gaze of the Monster. Pierce made rubber lids, which were

easier than wax to apply, held better, were easier to remove, and were also re-usable.

Next is the long scar, which begins on the Monster's left jawline near the chin and extends back beneath his left ear and into the hairline at the back of his neck. Pierce drew the scar with red pencil, and then built up the edges with cotton and collodion, just as he built up the edges of the vertical scar above the Monster's right eye.

It was discovered that, when Karloff removed his dental bridgework from the back of the right side of his mouth and sucked





in his cheek, a skull-like hollow appeared under his cheekbone. The hollow was pulled in even more via shadowing and the addition of a black beauty mark in its center. In subsequent films, the beauty mark remained a permanent part of the Monster's makeup.

The world had to wait eight years, for the Monster's third film, *SON OF FRANKENSTEIN*, to find out what those knob-like metal studs were on either side of his neck. They were discussed in a 1939 publicity interview with Pierce and in the film itself, during the medical exam given by Dr. Wolf von Frankenstein (Basil Rathbone).

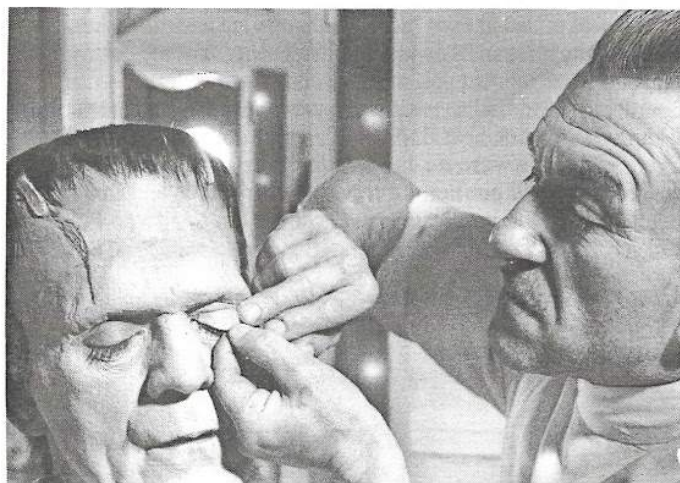
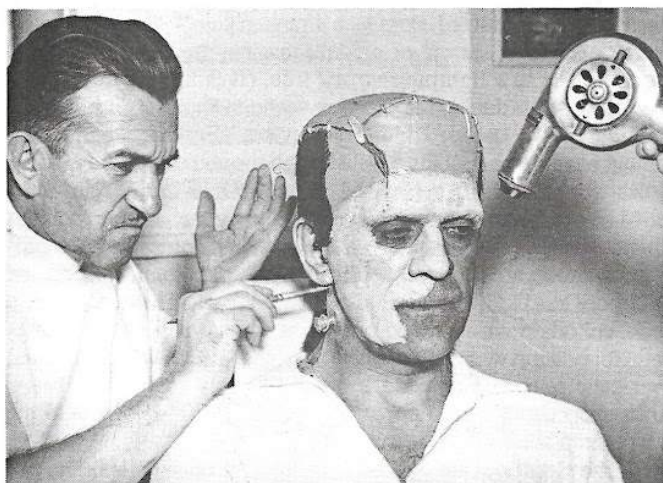
Simply put, the studs are the external electrodes through which electricity is conducted from von Frankenstein's great generator, bringing the Monster out of a coma that resulted from his standing too close to a lightning-struck tree. (It is interesting to note that at no time during the creation scene in the first film is there anything visibly connected to these devices.) Each lightweight aluminum electrode has at the base a flange about the size of a quarter. Holes were cut in the centers of one-and-a-half-inch circles fashioned from organza fabric, which were slid over each electrode and fit snugly against the flange. These circular organza patches provided a broad area for the application of spirit gum, making the electrodes less likely to come loose. The fabric was glued to Karloff's neck, collodion was brushed on to conceal the edges, and grease-paint foundation was applied over the fabric. Then a washer, slipped over the electrode, clamped the organza tightly against the flange. An L-shaped pin was slipped through the electrode and held the washer in place.

The electrodes are not "bolts" as they're often called. The one on the right looks like the battered head of an old iron spike; the washer had to be put on before the flange was attached to the bottom, because it couldn't fit over either the head or the flange. The left electrode is just a cylinder, its smoothness interrupted only by the L-shaped pin. (Speaking of those pins, the one in the right electrode was tilted at a 10° angle.) Why these minor differences between left and right electrodes were thought necessary is anybody's guess, but, as such, they look like opposite ends of a piece of hardware called

*The Three Phases of Frank: Jack Pierce's makeup and Boris Karloff's physiognomy underwent subtle changes throughout the 30s. LEFT to RIGHT: The Monster in FRANKENSTEIN (1931), BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN (1935), and SON OF FRANKENSTEIN (1939). BELOW: The King of Horror played the role one last time in a 1963 episode of ROUTE 66. Pierce's expertise was sorely missed.*







*Jack Pierce supplied Boris Karloff with his face one last time for 1939's SON OF FRANKENSTEIN. By then, the Monster's flattop skull was a rubber headpiece (TOP LEFT). The Monster's heavy eyelids (RIGHT) had been a suggestion of Karloff's on the first film in the series. Mortician's wax was originally used, but Pierce later fashioned eyelids of rubber. The Monster's hands (BOTTOM LEFT) had their usual quota of scars and blackened fingernails.*

(coincidentally) a Universal Clevis Pin, which is used for mechanical, not electrical, purposes.

When Frankenstein's Monster is represented in comic books, cartoons, ads, and the like, he is usually depicted as having both hands sewn onto his arms, with a scar ringing each wrist. In fact, only the Monster's right hand has been surgically attached, the scar coming close to the wrist on the pinky side and angling up the forearm on the thumb side. (Interestingly, in SON OF FRANKENSTEIN, the scar is angled the other way.) The scar was made of cotton and collodion, just like the one on the Monster's jaw.

Running lengthwise on the underside of the Monster's left forearm is a strip of metal with cross pieces on either end. This was, perhaps, a kind of brace. Although it was firmly attached to the Monster's forearm in each sequel, in the first film it was held loosely with two rubber bands!

From 1935's BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN on, a life cast of the left forearm and hand was required to make a rubber cast on the arm brace (which was then painted silver), because the forearm required movement and a rubber piece would move with it. Pierce's old life-casting techniques would probably have caused the actor's

arm hairs to be painfully ripped out during the process; since removing the makeup from both arms resulted in pretty much the same thing, it became necessary for each actor portraying the Monster to shave his forearms.

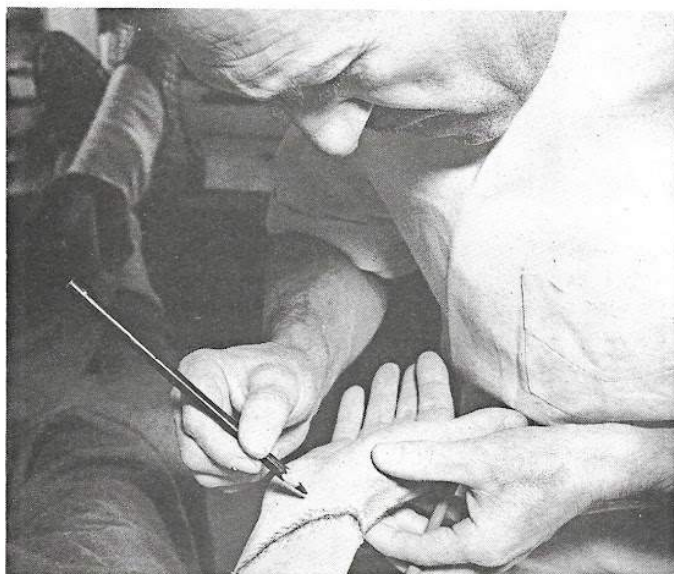
According to most accounts, Pierce used shoe polish to darken the Monster's fingertips. (Such discoloration was presumably intended to represent the dark blue cyanotic tinge occurring when too little oxygen reaches the body's extremities.) Pierce probably used the polish for its staining properties, regular makeup being too easily rubbed off.

Next is the greasepaint. Nearly every account of the Monster's makeup patiently explains how Pierce carefully developed a special grey-green (or blue-grey or blue-green or whatever) greasepaint which photographed as grey. This is remarkable, because—and you read it here first, folks—almost every color photographs grey on black-and-white film. Now, I know that, on black-and-white stock, a medium-value red photographs much darker than the same-value blue, and that different colors of light affect the lightness or darkness of any color, but these phenomena really don't apply to the Monster.

Most likely, Pierce selected a palette of three to five different shades of greasepaint—foundation, one or two shadow colors, and one or two highlight colors—that photographed within the proper range of greys. In this way, the cosmetically-enhanced shadows and highlights of the Monster's face didn't look obvious and phony. These colors could simply have been normal shades of light, medium, and dark flesh, but they were probably grey or green. (The Monster could have been pumpkin orange, which, in black and white, photographs grey, but an orange Monster is pretty ludicrous compared to one whose flesh looks convincingly dead.)

The truly remarkable thing about the painted-on makeup is how skillfully and realistically it was applied. Whether he is in the tower laboratory with its weird and inscrutable light sources, or out in the strong August sunlight by the lake, the Monster's makeup is flawless and impressive.

Like the beauty mark in the hollow cheek, two other makeup accents contribute to the drama of the Monster's face: deep, dark circles under the eyes, signifying a closeness to death, and dark lips (yet another discoloring effect of cyanosis). The lips remained part of the makeup, but after FRANKENSTEIN the dark circles under the Monster's eyes vanished.







*The Monster and his Maker*

The final touch to the Monster's appearance is a rather unusual wig. Black with grey scattered throughout, the hair is long but sparse and clings greasily to the contours of the skull, with stringy bangs, looking like a grotesque parody of Oliver Hardy's, plastered to the forehead and temples.

The Frankenstein Monster is a true makeup masterpiece: Sixty years after its first appearance, it remains an image recognized and beloved all over the world. Remarkably, with the possible exception of that rubber-banded arm brace, at no point does Jack Pierce's technique look out of place or ridiculous. The Monster is truly surreal, the impossible become concrete and realistic.

Much has been made of the great amount of time Pierce required to fashion the Monster and of his stubborn adherence to outmoded materials, but one must remember that Pierce has to his credit more classic, original fantasy creations than any other makeup artist in history, including Lon Chaney, Sr. Of course, his is the best Frankenstein Monster ever. No contest.

Nearly every Frankenstein film after the original Universal eight offered us apologies rather than art, excuses rather than technique: not enough time, not enough money, not enough talent. The Monster is a creature combining the nightmarishly disparate concepts of genius and madness, a creature of dead components endowed with life by unholy science to become an agent of Death itself. Instead of an imaginative approach to this fantastic being, we've been treated to a seemingly endless parade of amateur-night garbage. Believability—the one element essential to the acceptance of the fantastic—is forsaken in favor of gross-out contests.

They just don't make Monsters like they used to—because they just don't make Monster-makers like Jack Pierce.



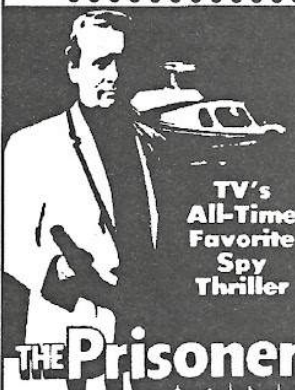
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# From Silents to Shadows

## A Last Interview with Joan Bennett

by Steve Randisi

On the evening of December 7, 1990, Joan Bennett was entertaining a dinner guest with her husband in their home in Scarsdale, New York, when she suffered a fatal heart attack. Her passing marked the end of not only an extraordinary life and film career, but also a generation of colorful and talented artists.

Joan's father, Richard Bennett (1873–1944), a popular matinee idol of the 1920s, enjoyed a stage career that lasted more than 50 years. His three daughters, Constance, (1904–1965), Barbara (1908–1958), and Joan, were also to enjoy considerable fame as Hollywood leading ladies from the 1930s through the 1950s.

Joan Bennett was born on February 27, 1910, in Palisades, New Jersey. Her family moved to New York when she was still a toddler. Her mother, Mabel Adrienne Morrison, was a stage actress and star in her own right.

While *en route* to Europe, where she had planned to complete her education, Joan met Jack Fox, the first of her four husbands. Their marriage produced a daughter and ended in divorce shortly thereafter.

In order to provide for her baby, Joan accepted an offer from her father to co-star in his Broadway production of *JARNEGAN*, a story about early Hollywood based on a Jim Tully novel. The 1928 play received good reviews, and the elder Bennett (who starred in the title role) was understandably proud of his daughter.

About this time, United Artists dispatched Joseph Schenck to New York with instructions to find an ingenue to play opposite Ronald Colman in his first sound film. The order came from Samuel Goldwyn, a United Artists executive who was one of the first independent producers to attain mogul status in Hollywood. Having failed two previous screen tests, Joan initially rejected the offer to make a third, but reconsidered upon realizing that acting in films could prove economically beneficial. Her father, not totally in favor of her leaving his company, nonetheless wished her success.

Joan Bennett arrived in Hollywood in January 1929 to shoot *BULLDOG DRUMMOND*, with Ronald Colman starring in the title role. She negotiated her own salary

and contractual terms with the studio. Her earnings for *JARNEGAN* had been a mere \$150 per week. When she signed with United Artists, her salary was increased to \$500 per week, in addition to other benefits she was to receive for the duration of the five-year contract.

After completing the Ronald Colman film, Joan made *THREE LIVE GHOSTS* (1929), but the results were less than what the studio had anticipated, and she was released from her contract. The actress decided to free-lance.

Some of the best Joan Bennett performances were in the early, creaky talkies, in which she was usually cast as the ingenue, or "simpering blonde," as the actress described herself. These included such titles as *DISRAELI* (1929), with George Arliss; *THE MISSISSIPPI GAMBLER* (1929), with Joseph Schildkraut; and *MOBY DICK* (1930), with John Barrymore.

After free-lancing for about a year, Joan signed a contract with Fox, a major studio, which began planning big things for their star-to-be. It was a two-year deal, during which time she would appear on screen with many of the popular leading men of the day. Her wholesome blonde good looks had much to do with her growing appeal at the box office—and being the little sister of Constance Bennett, the star of many sophisticated comedies of the 1930s, certainly did not harm her career.

In 1932, Joan Bennett married for the second time; her groom was screenwriter Gene Markey. Also that year, she made two successful films with Spencer Tracy, who soon became her favorite leading man. The films were *SHE WANTED A MILLIONAIRE* and *ME AND MY GAL*, both produced by Fox. Her roles in these and other films at that time ranged from small-town girls and waitresses to worldly mistresses.

When Fox dropped her in 1933, she again decided to free-lance. The following year, Joan accepted a small but significant role in RKO's *LITTLE WOMEN*. She played Amy in the popular Katharine Hepburn classic, which remains one of director George Cukor's best-loved works.

About the time that *LITTLE WOMEN* was released, Joan came to the attention of Walter Wanger, who immediately put her under contract. He subsequently found work for her in several high-quality films (many of which he produced) at all the major stu-

dios. At Universal, Joan met *THE MAN WHO RECLAIMED HIS HEAD* (1935); at Paramount, *PRIVATE WORLDS* was a more absorbing film, proving to be a worthy vehicle for the up-and-coming star. Seldom seen today, this 1935 melodrama dealt with the delicate subject of mental illness. Under Gregory LaCava's direction, Joan gave a memorable performance in the role of Joel McCrea's insane wife.

The years 1935 to 1937 saw steady progress in the career of Joan Bennett. She made such light, romantic comedies as *MISSISSIPPI* and *TWO FOR TONIGHT* (both with Bing Crosby) in 1935. She fell in love with Fred MacMurray in *THIRTEEN HOURS BY AIR* (1936), an interesting murder mystery involving a transcontinental flight. She was romanced by Joel McCrea in *TWO IN A CROWD*, and by Cary Grant in *BIG BROWN EYES* and *WEDDING PRESENT* (all 1936).

In 1938, Joan changed her hair color from blonde to brunette (via dark wigs) for *TRADE WINDS*, another film produced by Wanger. The transformation had a profound effect on her image, and suggested a *femme fatale* (a type very much in vogue in the late-depression years). Equally significant was the fact that *TRADE WINDS* was a good film. It was an intriguing story that had the heroine (Joan) suspected of murder by a detective (Fredric March). He pursues her around the world until they fall in love and solve the mystery.

After *TRADE WINDS*, Joan decided to retain her new hair color. Not only did the public respond favorably to the new look, but producers began to offer her a greater range of characterizations.

In 1940, the actress, who had divorced Gene Markey three years earlier, married Walter Wanger. (It is ironic to note that Markey later married Hedy Lamarr, with whom Joan was often compared after darkening her blonde locks.) Joan had one child by Markey, a daughter; she also had two daughters by Wanger.

In the 40s, Joan made the four films for which she is best remembered today. All were directed by Fritz Lang, the genius who had made his mark two decades earlier with the silent *METROPOLIS* (1927), a stylish study of future society.

Under Lang's brilliant direction, Joan Bennett filmed *MAN HUNT* (1941), with Walter Pidgeon; *THE WOMAN IN THE*

**Steve Randisi has contributed to Classic Images. He is a member of the DARK SHADOWS festival committee.**



WINDOW (1944), with Edward G. Robinson; *SCARLET STREET* (1946), again with Robinson; and *THE SECRET BEYOND THE DOOR* (1948), with Michael Redgrave. These films are studies in film noir, and her roles in them contrast sharply with her earlier screen work. She was no longer the sweet ingenue, but a sexy bad girl, a dangerously sly woman involved in everything from murder to mayhem.

**THE WOMAN IN THE WINDOW** remains Joan Bennett's crowning achievement. It concerns a mild-mannered professor (Edward G. Robinson) who becomes fascinated with a painting of a young woman, Alice Reed (Joan). Meeting Alice, he becomes involved in murder and a subsequent cover-up. The film is full of surprises and retains its suspenseful ambience quite well today. It is not surprising that the actress considered it a favorite among her 77 films.

Also ranking high on the star's list of favorites was *SCARLET STREET*. Joan played Kitty March, an unscrupulous woman who takes advantage of a meek artist (Edward G. Robinson again), thereby provoking him to kill her. The actress had a field day under Lang's superb direction, giving a credible performance as the sensual, shady Kitty. This film broke with Hollywood tradition in that the unwitting murderer went unpunished by the law, although he meets a grim fate nonetheless.

Following her film noir period, the actress was re-teamed with Spencer Tracy in two delightful companion pictures, *FATHER OF THE BRIDE* (1950) and *FATHER'S LITTLE DIVIDEND* (1951). Joan was cast as the loving mother of young Elizabeth Taylor in both family comedies, which have retained their warmth and freshness, as evinced by their frequent revivals on television.

**WE'RE NO ANGELS** (1955) gave Joan the opportunity to work with Humphrey Bogart, whom she greatly admired. Her role in the Michael Curtiz directed film gave her top female billing (as usual), but few moments on screen to shine. It was reported that Bogart refused to make the film unless Joan was cast in the picture.

With fewer film roles being offered to actresses of her age and stature, Joan turned to stage work in the 50s and early 60s. In

1951, she toured in *SUSAN AND GOD*, and, in 1953, did *BELL, BOOK AND CANDLE*. In 1963, she made her London stage debut in *NEVER TOO LATE*, the popular Broadway hit about the complications arising when a middle-aged couple discover that they are about to become parents. Unfortunately, the play was not



*Joan Bennett*

favorably received by the British press, and its run was curtailed.

In 1966, Joan entered a phase of her career that flattered and amazed her. She accepted an offer from Dan Curtis to star in a daytime soap opera called *DARK SHADOWS*. The actress didn't think the show would last long, much less be remembered and revived 25 years later.

On *DARK SHADOWS*, Joan portrayed Elizabeth Collins Stoddard, the matriarch of the mysterious (and supernaturally prone) Collins family. An innovative concept for daytime television, the show was originally planned as a Gothic romance, combining mystery and suspense. Initial audience reaction was less than enthusiastic, and after a year of creaky shudders on ABC, the series was close to cancellation.

In April 1967, Curtis hoped to save the show by infusing an element of horror. Added to the cast was Jonathan Frid in the role of Barnabas Collins, a character who harbored a very dark secret: He was a 175-year-old vampire. The program was saved by the arrival of Miss Bennett's vampiric cousin, and within months it

became TV's hottest daytime attraction, commanding an audience of some 20 million viewers. In 1970, Joan recreated her role for *HOUSE OF DARK SHADOWS*, the big-screen adaptation of the series. Both the film and the TV series were produced in New York, where the actress resided.

Because the original version of *DARK SHADOWS* has been constantly revived on video screens around the country, Joan Bennett acquired a new and loyal following. She graciously attended several *DARK SHADOWS* festivals, where she signed autographs and answered questions from her young fans, many of whom were unfamiliar with her earlier work on the silver screen.

After *DARK SHADOWS* was cancelled in 1971, Joan starred in several films containing, as the titles indicate, a hint of the macabre: *THE EYES OF CHARLES SAND* (made for TV, 1972); *SUSPIRIA* (1977), in which she was cast as the leader of a coven of witches; and *THIS HOUSE POSSESSED* (made for TV, 1981).

On December 22, 1982,

Joan Bennett made her last television appearance, portraying herself in an episode of the daytime serial *THE GUIDING LIGHT*, fondly recalling her days on *DARK SHADOWS*. She remained professionally inactive thereafter, preferring to travel, read, and attend social functions around the country. Happily, Joan's last years were peaceful and contented ones, as she devoted time to her fourth husband, David Wilde (whom she married in 1973), her daughters, and 12 grandchildren.

Joan Bennett survived her share of career ups and downs, disappointments and triumphs. She remains, both on the screen and in our memories, a woman of infinite poise and charm.

The following interview with Joan Bennett was conducted in her home in January 1989.





A very youthful Joan Bennett (LEFT) poses for a formal portrait with her older sister, Hollywood legend Constance Bennett (circa late 1920s).

**SS:** Can you tell us a little about your personal background, Miss Bennett?

**JB:** I was born in Palisades, New Jersey, but I don't have any memories of living in New Jersey, because we moved to New York when I was only three years old. I went to day school in New York, and then went to St. Margaret's, a boarding school in Connecticut, which is now co-ed. When I completed that, I went to finishing school in Versailles, France, where I was quite happy. **SS:** You did not initially plan to be an actress, is that correct?

**JB:** Yes, I wanted to be a decorator. I married when I was very young, having met my husband-to-be [Jack Fox] on the boat on the way over to France. My mother was in London, so I spent the summer in London, which is where he was going. When I got out of school, I married him. My mother protested, saying, "You're too young to get married! You can't!" I said, "Well, I'll elope if you won't let me have a wedding." So she let me have a wedding. I had a baby a year later, and my husband, unfortunately, was a drinker. He stayed on the wagon until the day before the baby was born, and the day after. Then my father said, "What do you plan to do now, to support your baby?" And so, the interior-decorating thing went out the window and my father gave me a part in the play he was doing on Broadway. **SS:** What was the play?

**JB:** It was called JARNEGAN. Then talking pictures were just starting and I was offered a contract at United Artists. My father said, "You can't leave the company. You have a run-of-the-play contract and you can't go!" But my mother said, "She's under-aged and I signed the contract for her—she can go!" (Laughs).

**SS:** Who was responsible for bringing you to Hollywood?

**JB:** Sam Goldwyn, for United Artists. U.A. was nice. It was a small studio, a small lot, their own, but it was nice. BULLDOG DRUMMOND was my first picture, the first one officially. Ronald Colman was the star; he was very kind. He gave me a lot of advice, such as how to stand and turn my head and so on.

**SS:** Hadn't you been in silent films before making BULLDOG DRUMMOND?

**JB:** Yes, but they were just little nothings, before the talkies came in. BULLDOG DRUMMOND was about 1929, the first year for sound. Before that, I hardly did anything in the silents. In fact, I hardly remember anything about them. I never had any sort of real part in the silents; they were just all little bit parts.

**SS:** What would you say was the biggest difference between working in silents and working in talkies?

**JB:** I am sure the difference, for the actors, was learning lines. With sound, one must learn lines. And then, they change them so rapidly that you can only study them the night before. When talking pictures started, many actors from the stage were able to find work because they had had a good training ground for them: the stage. And then, they had good voices for the screen.

**SS:** Did any member of your family star in silent pictures?

**JB:** I think my sister Constance did. I think she did a few silents, and then she left films and got married. Then, after she was divorced, she went back to films.

**SS:** You come from quite a distinguished theatrical family...

**JB:** My father, Richard Bennett, was a matinee idol in his time. I had theatrical experience not only on my father's side, but on my mother's side as well: the Morrisons, the

Woods, and the Volkes, which went all the way back. Five generations back, on my mother's side. My mother's father was a Shakespearean actor, Lewis Morrison; he did FAUST on stage. And, of course, my sisters, Constance and Barbara, were in pictures. Constance was the eldest, then Barbara, and I was the youngest. Constance made films right up until she died. I think MADAME X was her last picture.

**SS:** With such an outstanding family heritage, did you prefer working in films or on the stage?

**JB:** I preferred the stage, but movies were certainly more lucrative. For the actor, the stage is more rewarding because of the reaction one gets from the audience. Once, I took a short break from films and did a play called STAGE STRUCK. It was a story about young actresses, at a place where they all lived, and how they struggled and everything. Then, later, I did more plays. But I would say films certainly paid better.

**SS:** On what were salaries based in those days? Was it determined by the studio or was it star power?

**JB:** I would imagine it was box-office performance. I never really thought about it one way or the other. One always argued for more money, anyway, before signing a film contract. But I think that the more in demand you were, the more money you got.

**SS:** One of your early films, LITTLE WOMEN, has become a classic. Have you any memories of making that film?

**JB:** Yes, because of my daughter Melinda, who was born on my birthday. I was carrying her while I was doing LITTLE WOMEN. I remember I was supposed to fall down the stairs in one scene and I couldn't do it because I was pregnant. I think Jean Parker fell down the stairs in my place. Because of my condition, they changed the script and switched it around.



At her Malibu home in the early 30s, Joan Bennett poses with mother Mabel Adrienne Morrison for an informal portrait.



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| <input type="checkbox"/> Bloodbath at the House of Death ('85) Vincent Price       | <input type="checkbox"/> Jennifer ('78) Nina Foch                                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bloody Moon ('81) Olivia Pascal, Jess Franco directs      | <input type="checkbox"/> Just Before Dawn ('80)                                     |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Buried Alive ('79) Joe D'Amato directs                    | <input type="checkbox"/> The Lake of Dracula ('71) Toho horror                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Caged Heat! ('74) Barbara Steele prison epic              | <input type="checkbox"/> Let Sleeping Corpses Lie ('74) Letterboxed, uncut          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chained Heat ('83) Linda Blair, Sybil Danning             | <input type="checkbox"/> Love Me Deadly ('72) Necrophilism                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A Chinese Ghost Story ('88) Letterboxed                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Mad Doctor of Blood Island ('69) John Ashley               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Circus of Horrors ('59) Yvonne Monlaure/Yvonne Romain     | <input type="checkbox"/> Make Them Die Slowly ('80) Umberto Lenzi directs           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Count Dracula ('78) BBC TV/Louis Jordan/Uncut on T-160    | <input type="checkbox"/> Man From Deep River ('77) Umberto Lenzi directs            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Crawlspace ('86) Klaus Kinski                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Mansion of the Doomed ('76) Michael Pataki directs         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Craze ('74) Jack Palance                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Mark of the Devil, Part II ('72) Banned in 19 countries!   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Crimson ('87) Paul Naschy                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Naked Super Witches of the Rio Amore ('77) Jess Franco     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The Curse of the Crimson Altar ('68) Karloff, Lee, Steele | <input type="checkbox"/> Naked Warriors ('83) Sara Bay & Pam Grier                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The Day After Halloween ('79)                             | <input type="checkbox"/> The Nightcomers ('71) Brando & Beacham                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Deadly Sanctuary ('69) Jack Palance/Jess Franco           | <input type="checkbox"/> Nocturna ('78) Vampire disco queen Nai Bonet               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dead Pit ('89)                                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Opera ('88) Dario Argento directs                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Death Dream ('72) Bob Clark directs                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Ory of the Dead ('65) Ed Wood & Criswell                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Death Warmup ('84)                                        | <input type="checkbox"/> OSA ('85) Apocalyptic sci-fi                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The Demons ('72) Jess Franco. Sex-crazed nuns             | <input type="checkbox"/> The Perils of Gwendoline ('84) Tawny Kitaen                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Devil Fish ('84) Umberto Lenzi directs                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Pieces ('81) Christopher & Lynda Day George                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The Devil's Rain ('71) Letterboxed                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Possession ('82/uncut UK version) Isabelle Adjani          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The Devil's Wedding Night ('73) Mark Damon, Sarah Bay     | <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric Women ('50)                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The Doctor and the Devils ('83) Timothy Dalton            | <input type="checkbox"/> Reform School Girls ('85) Sybil Danning, Wendy Q. Williams |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dominique ('78)                                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Savage Streets ('85) Linda Blair & Linnea Quigley          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Don't Go In the House ('80)                               | <input type="checkbox"/> Savages ('72)                                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Doomwatch ('72) Tigon Films                               | <input type="checkbox"/> Schizo ('76) Peter Walker directs                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Door-To-Door Maniac ('61) Johnny Cash                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Schizoid ('80) Klaus Kinski                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The Dorm That Dripped Blood ('81)                         | <input type="checkbox"/> The Sect ('90) Dario Argento                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dr. Jekyll & Les Femmes ('81) Letterboxed, Udo Kier       | <input type="checkbox"/> Slaughter Hotel ('71) Klaus Kinski, Sarah Bay              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dracula Sucks ('79) Annette Haven, Jamie Gillis           | <input type="checkbox"/> Slave of the Cannibal God ('78) Ursula Andress             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The Emerald Jungle ('80) Umberto Lenzi directs            | <input type="checkbox"/> Slumber Party Massacre ('82)                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Encounters of the Spooky Kind II ('90) Libs. Asian horror | <input type="checkbox"/> The Story of O ('75) Corinne Clery-uncut                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Eroticize ('83) Kitten Natividad                          | <input type="checkbox"/> SS Experiment: Love Camp ('76) Sergio Garrone directs      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Escape from Women's Prison ('76) Conrad Brodhead directs  | <input type="checkbox"/> Street Trash ('88)                                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The Evil of Dracula ('75) Japanese horror                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Superstition ('82)                                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Exorcism ('74) Paul Naschy                                | <input type="checkbox"/> Sweet Sugar ('72) Phyllis Davis behind bars-uncut          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The Face of Fu Manchu ('65) Christopher Lee               | <input type="checkbox"/> Tanya's Island ('80) Variety & Rick Baker's ape            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fiend ('83) George Stover                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater of Death ('66) Christopher Lee                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The Final Terror ('81) Daryl Hannah, Rachel Ward          | <input type="checkbox"/> They Saved Hitler's Brain ('63)                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The First Nude Musical ('76) Cindy Williams               | <input type="checkbox"/> Tourist Trap ('79) Chuck Conners, Tanya Roberts            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Flesh Gordon ('72) Uncut                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Tower of London ('62) Vincent Price                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Frankenstein 1980 ('73) John Richardson                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Trap Them & Kill Them ('79) Joe D'Amato directs            |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Hercules ('59) Letterboxed with Steve Reeves              | <input type="checkbox"/> Unhinged ('83) Unrated version                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Horridible ('64) William Castle directs                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Vengeance of Fu Manchu ('67) Christopher Lee               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> House of the Long Shadows ('82) Peter Walker directs      | <input type="checkbox"/> White Cannibal Queen ('79) Jess Franco                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> House on Straw Hill ('75) Udo Kier, Linda Hayden          | <input type="checkbox"/> The Wicker Man ('72) Christopher Lee & Ingrid Pitt         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hundin ('84) Amazon women action                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Za, Warriors of the Magic Mountain ('89) Libs. Asian       |

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**SS:** Do you remember George Cukor, the director of the film?

**JB:** Oh, very well. He was a wonderful director, very nice to work for. He used to say, "Come on, you little bitches, we're ready!" (Laughs). But he was actually very nice and a highly competent, talented director.

**SS:** Did you ever work for a particularly tough director?

**JB:** Yes, Fritz Lang, who was another great director. I did my best work for him and we got along beautifully together. Most people didn't like him because he was very demanding and wanted scenes done exactly as he wanted them. He'd make you do take after take until he got what he wanted. We did SECRET BEYOND THE DOOR, MAN HUNT, THE WOMAN IN THE WINDOW, and SCARLET STREET. At one point, Fritz and my then-husband Walter Wanger and I formed a company to make films, Diana Productions, named after my daughter. But it didn't work out.

**SS:** In 1938, you changed your hair color from blonde to brunette. Was this done so you could test for the part of Scarlett O'Hara in GONE WITH THE WIND?

**JB:** No. I'd changed my hair color for TRADE WINDS. After I had become a brunette, everyone thought it was better for me, an improvement. And then, even my parts were better after that. Up until then I had been sort of the simpering blonde.

Very demure and innocent parts. After becoming a brunette, I just seemed to get better parts.

**SS:** Were you disappointed in not playing Scarlett in GONE WITH THE WIND?

**JB:** I would have liked to have done it. I guess I was disappointed when it didn't work out. I've always said that if Vivien Leigh had stayed over in London and hadn't come over here to see Larry Olivier, I would have gotten the part.

**SS:** You did "go South" for MISSISSIPPI, with W. C. Fields.

**JB:** Oh, that was so long ago. However, I do remember that one because Bing Crosby sang to me in it. I enjoyed working with Bing; he was a friendly man.

**SS:** Another great leading man was Humphrey Bogart . . .

**JB:** Oh, I loved him! Bogie lived down the street from me when he was married to Betty Bacall. And I can tell you he was dear; a very nice person. He was very supportive of me when we did WE'RE NO ANGELS. That film had a very good cast and director. The three were Peter Ustinov, Aldo Ray, and Bogie. Michael Curtiz directed it.

**SS:** Do you ever watch your own pictures?

**JB:** We have tapes of them, the ones we like; we watch those sometimes.

**SS:** Of all the leading men you worked with, do you have a favorite? Do you have a favorite among your many films?

**JB:** Well, as far as leading men go, I'd have to say it was Spence. My favorite films, though, would be the ones made with Fritz Lang. THE WOMAN IN THE WINDOW and SCARLET STREET; those two are my favorites, with Eddie G. Robinson. But Spencer Tracy I absolutely loved working with because he had such a great sense of humor. We got along very well and did four pictures together: ME AND MY GAL, SHE WANTED A MILLIONAIRE, FATHER OF THE BRIDE and FATHER'S LITTLE DIVIDEND. That last one was a sequel to FATHER OF THE BRIDE, with Liz Taylor, made when she was quite young. Spence was delightful on the set; I have fond memories of him.

**SS:** You raised your own children while you were working in Hollywood. How many children do you have?

**JB:** Four of them—all girls! Diana, the eldest; Melinda; Steffi; and Shelly. None of them are actresses, although Melinda started with it for a while and then gave it up. Melinda now lives in Chicago; Steffi and Shelly live in New York, and Diana lives in California. I also have 12 grandchildren, so it's a rather large family.

**SS:** Did you find it challenging raising a family and working in films at the same time?

*Continued on page 47*



# Afternoon Class

## Joan Bennett on *Dark Shadows*

by Marcy Robin

**S**he was one of the first—a classic film actress appearing as a regular on a daytime soap opera, back when it just “wasn’t done.” A Hollywood star on a TV soap? What a “step down!”

But Joan Bennett took a permanent role on ABC’s *DARK SHADOWS*. Featured as often as three times a week, she brought elegance and prestige to the genre; it was not a “step down.” And she was one of only three cast members—the others were Louis Edmonds and Nancy Barrett—who was there from beginning (June 27, 1966) to end (April 2, 1971).

She was unique, a big name from Hollywood’s Golden Age. She had worked with virtually every screen idol and acclaimed director. She’d made 78 films by the time she joined *DARK SHADOWS*; television executives were in awe of her. In a 1967 interview, Joan Bennett spoke frankly about Hollywood. “It doesn’t seem to be fun anymore. The spirit has changed . . . the sense of life, the gaiety, seems to be gone. My film career faded. You reach a certain age in Hollywood . . . there’s a shortage of glamour roles.”

So she came to TV as Elizabeth Collins Stoddard, matriarch of the wealthy Collins family. She found *DARK SHADOWS* “immensely challenging and rewarding,” quite different from the movies, where filming a single scene sometimes took days. For afternoon TV, she had to learn and perform up to 30 pages of dialogue for a day’s shoot—with no retakes—then do it anew the next day. But she enjoyed doing the show, finding TV “a more spontaneous medium than the movies.”

*DARK SHADOWS* wasn’t a typical TV soap. It began as a Gothic romance and gradually became the first daytime program to explore—then embrace—such supernatural figures as vampires, ghosts, werewolves, a witch, and a warlock, and such bizarre plot twists as time travel and “parallel universe” stories. *DARK SHADOWS* roamed the centuries, allowing the cast to play their regular characters’ ancestors and wear elegant period costumes on lavishly appointed sets. A “repertory company” quality resulted from the variety of roles available to the actors.

In the beginning, Elizabeth Collins Stoddard hadn’t set foot off the family grounds in 17 years. She kept a key to a locked basement door on a chain around her neck. “I had murdered my husband,” remembered Joan Bennett. “He was buried in the basement. When they went down to the basement—he wasn’t there. It turned out I hadn’t killed him. I’d just stunned him. So now I’m not a murderess anymore.”

No, but “Liz” had problems enough, including rebellious daughter Carolyn (Nancy Barrett), troubled nephew David (David Henesy), and a mysterious cousin from England, a man with odd, nocturnal habits and 18th-century charm: Barnabas Collins (Jonathan Frid).

To fill in the background of this unusual gentleman, *DARK SHADOWS* flashed all the way back to 1795. There, Joan Bennett played Naomi Collins, the sensitive mother of young Sarah (Sharon Smyth) and family heir Barnabas. Naomi could not comprehend the dark forces surrounding her family, the result of Barnabas

spurning the love of a possessive witch, and watched helplessly as she lost her son to a bat bite and her daughter to pneumonia. She eventually discovered Barnabas’ secret—that he had been transformed into a vampire—and committed suicide.

Back in 1968, Elizabeth became convinced that she was doomed to be buried alive. She soon lapsed into a deathlike coma and was buried in a special coffin, complete with an alarm bell for her to sound on awakening, that she’d had prepared for her “passing.” Then the alarm bell went off . . .

In another storyline, set in 1897, Joan Bennett played Judith Collins, who expected to receive not a penny from the supposed family heir, Edward (Louis Edmonds). But the dying family matriarch left everything to Judith. Furious accusations followed, but Judith hung on to her position of power—that is, until she fell prey to fortune-hunter Gregory Trask (Jerry Lacy). He married her and proceeded to drive Judith insane. She finally regained her sanity and enjoyed a solid revenge by walling Trask up alive.

In the present day—1970 by then—Elizabeth was brainwashed by Leviathans: hideous, Lovecraftian creatures out to claim the world as their own.

Parallel time came next. As the alternate version of Elizabeth, Joan Bennett took part in no major plots. This was because she was off filming *HOUSE OF DARK SHADOWS* (1971), the first theatrical feature adapted from a daytime TV show. It was her first film in 10 years.

Back on television, she found herself in 1840 as Flora Collins, eccentric author of flowery novels. The story segued into 1841 parallel time, where Flora became a neglected wife with little to do.

Then *DARK SHADOWS* was cancelled. Joan Bennett was in the final episode, exclaiming wildly about a “wild animal attack”—which, for once, turned out to be just that and not evidence of yet another supernatural being out to inflict suffering on the Collins family. The actress made four films after *DARK SHADOWS*, and guested briefly on *THE GUIDING LIGHT* in 1982. Mostly, she settled back to enjoy her grandchildren and the benefits of a long, full life.

Joan Bennett had planned to attend the *DARK SHADOWS* 25th-Anniversary Festival in 1991, but died at age 80 on December 7, 1990. At previous conventions, she’d proved to be an elegant yet down-to-earth guest, patiently signing autographs—often for hours, because she didn’t want to disappoint her fans. Besides *DARK SHADOWS*, obituaries noted Joan Bennett’s many screen accomplishments, including the 1945 film from which this magazine respectfully takes its name: *SCARLET STREET*.



*Marcy Robin is the editor of Shadowgram, the official DARK SHADOWS newsletter, and author of numerous articles, short stories, and books on DARK SHADOWS, STAR WARS, and more.*



**JB:** Yes, it is challenging, because it is hard work. We were always so happy to get a late call. You had to be there, at the studio, by seven or seven-thirty in the morning for makeup and hair, which meant you had to be up by six. Then, of course, you worked until six in the evening. Then you had to get out of the costume and makeup, have dinner, and go to bed. And you had to learn your lines for the next day. Fortunately, I had a photographic memory and was able to handle it.

**SS:** *Didn't you once learn an entire script?*

**JB:** Yes, for one picture in which I had to have a Cockney accent. I had studied with somebody to get the Cockney accent down just right. That was for *MAN HUNT*, with Walter Pidgeon.

**SS:** *There's a Joan Bennett picture on television practically every night. Do you think your dad would have been proud of your success in the theatre and on TV?*

**JB:** I guess so. But I really don't watch that much TV and I don't look at any of the new movies. I don't know any of the new people in them. They really don't have stars. Now they turn them out practically overnight.

**SS:** *Speaking of television, let's talk about *DARK SHADOWS*...*

**JB:** I am amazed that people still watch it! People watch it now who were children when it was on originally. And now, their children are watching it. When it began, I didn't think it would last five minutes!

**SS:** *Did you find doing a daily soap opera tedious work?*

**JB:** Yes, it was. Sitting around waiting for them to light sets and so on, that took a lot of time. A lot of people had their lines written up for them. You had to be up early in the morning, too. In that respect, it was like working in films.

**SS:** *Do you have any special memories of your fellow cast members from the show?*

**JB:** Well, the cast was very nice to work with. I remember one young girl, Alexandra Moltke, who was very nice, as were the other young performers. And that makes a great difference, you know, in television, when the cast is good and compatible. We had to learn a script of about 25 pages. That is, the script itself was 25 pages, not what I had to learn. Whenever I needed time off, they would give me a nervous breakdown or something, and I'd be written out of the show for a while.

**SS:** *One of the last pictures you made before retiring, *SUSPIRIA*, is similar to *DARK SHADOWS*. Do you remember it?*

**JB:** Yes, it was a picture of that type, made in Rome. I liked working there, but, of course, not nearly as much as I did working here.

**SS:** *Summing up your career, is there anything you would have done differently? Do you have any unfulfilled ambitions?*

**JB:** Not really. I enjoyed what I did.

**SS:** *Is it true that you once sent columnist Hedda Hopper an unusual present?*

**JB:** (Laughs). Yes, though I can't remember exactly what it was she wrote that teed



*Edward G. Robinson is driven to murder Joan Bennett in *SCARLET STREET* (1945).*

me off. I think it had something to do about me and my sister Constance being rivals, which was completely untrue. We actually all got on quite well together, Constance, Barbara, and I. So it was Valentine's Day and I sent her a skunk! A live one!

**SS:** *Do you have any favorite pastimes or hobbies?*

**JB:** I enjoy reading; I read a great deal. We love to travel. David and I travel, take cruises, and we went to Australia last January. David is my fourth husband, and we

have been married nearly 20 years. But we had known each other before that, a long time. David was in the newspaper business; he owned one up here in New York. And so we enjoy traveling, going to the theatre.

**SS:** *How about movies?*

**JB:** No.

**SS:** *Do you think you would like to make more movies?*

**JB:** The way they make them now? Probably not!



*Joan Bennett scans the headlines in this scene from Fritz Lang's *THE WOMAN IN THE WINDOW*, a 1944 film noir classic.*





## Shock Drive-In Presents THE BLACK SCORPION

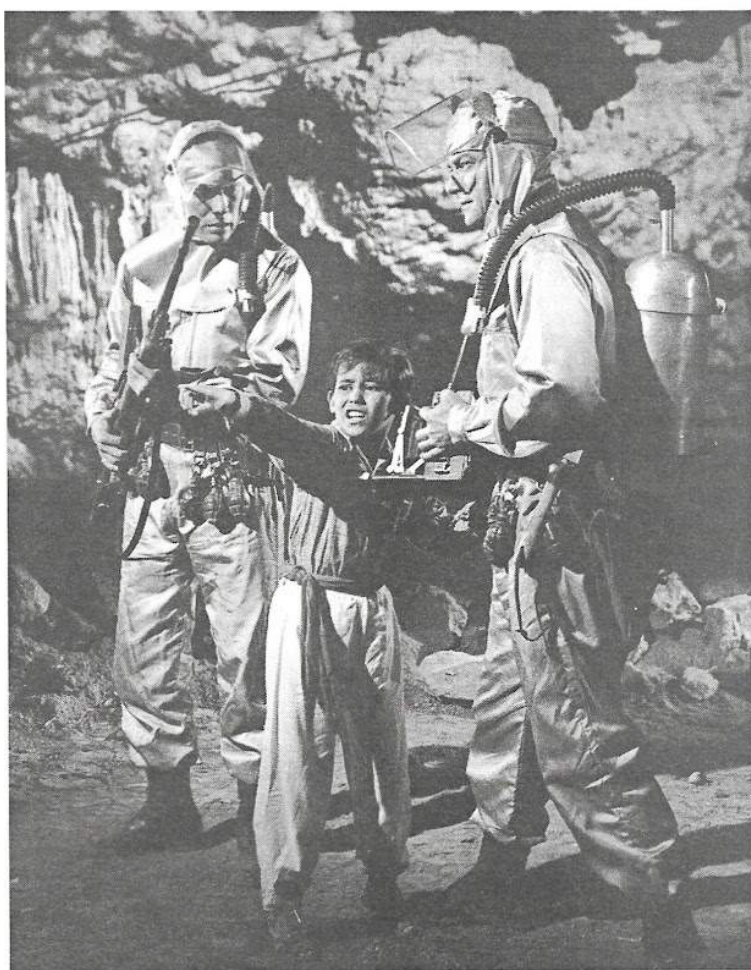
### Article and Interviews by John Brunas

Arachnophobiacs of every stripe had good cause to shudder in the 1950s, the decade of the Big Bug. Creepy, crawly critters, mutated in size a thousand times over as the result of radiation exposure or scientific experimentation gone wild, scuttled across miniature landscapes and process screens in rapid procession. Warner Bros. blazed the trail in 1954 with *THEM!*, released a year after their box-office smash *THE BEAST FROM 20,000 FATHOMS* (1953), which it vaguely resembled in concept and construction. *THEM!* somberly predicts the destruction of mankind via the after effects of atomic power. In this case, the threat takes the form of an army of desert ants that grow to monstrous proportions and nest in the sewers of Los Angeles.

Predictably, *THEM!* hatched a long line of offspring. Outsized spiders, the hands-down favorite among moviemakers for expressing the insect world at its most hideous, made a big impression in *WORLD WITHOUT END* (1956), *THE CYCLOPS* (1957), *THE INCREDIBLE SHRINKING MAN* (1957), *EARTH VS. THE SPIDER* (1958), *QUEEN OF OUTER SPACE* (1958), and *THE STRANGE WORLD OF PLANET X* (a.k.a. *THE COS-*

*MIC MONSTER* (1958). Never one to buck a trend, Universal-International offered not one but two likely contenders: Jack Arnold's *TARANTULA* (1955) and *THE DEADLY MANTIS* (1957), the latter competing with such pitiful efforts as Bert I. Gordon's *BEGINNING OF THE END* (giant locusts, 1957) and DCA's *MONSTER FROM GREEN HELL* (giant wasps, 1958) as the worst of their period's Big Bug flicks.

Inevitably, the scorpion got its turn to bash the daylight out of humanity in *THE BLACK SCORPION*, a modestly-budgeted "indie" presented by Warners in the fall of 1957. By this time, there was little originality in the rampaging-monster theme, established as far back as 1925, when a newborn brontosaurus, snatched from *THE LOST WORLD*, took a walking tour of London (much to the consternation of its inhabitants). There were a few notable exceptions. The menace of *THEM!* was expressed on a more intimate level than most, making it all the more effective. *TARANTULA* offered an especially gruesome little diversion: The scientists who inadvertently create the super-sized spider become monsters themselves after being afflicted with the disfiguring disease acromegaly.



*Down in the depths, Carlos Rivas, Mario Navarro, and Richard Denning track THE BLACK SCORPION to its subterranean lair.*



THE BLACK SCORPION treads on more familiar turf. This often exciting, second-rate rehash of THEM! shamelessly steals many of the 1954 classic's plot elements while managing to miss its dramatic impact and sense of urgency. But, unlike THEM!, THE BLACK SCORPION has few pretensions; it was made purely to thrill and to entertain, and in that capacity, it is successful. Despite its status, THEM! is generally mediocre in terms of writing and direction; the middle third, following the raid on the underground ant colonies, falters markedly. Its grave monition of nuclear doom had already become a cliché, even at this early point in the sci-fi cycle, enforcing the film's pompous tone. THE BLACK SCORPION sidesteps this preachy tone: The giant insects are prehistoric in nature, awakened from their slumber by a natural disaster rather than by human intervention.

In the special-effects department, THE BLACK SCORPION stands head and shoulders above its peers. The producers of giant-creature pictures usually opted for grossly exaggerated props or live, superimposed creatures to convey their illusions. Instead, the producers of THE BLACK SCORPION, Frank Melford and Jack Dietz, went straight to the source and hired the pioneer of screen animation, Willis O'Brien, to create the gruesomely imaginative effects for their production. The man who brought life to the creatures seen in the original THE LOST WORLD and KING KONG (1933), and who later helped launch the career of ace animator Ray Harryhausen, O'Brien designed and supervised the breathtaking visuals of THE BLACK SCORPION with the invaluable assistance of collaborator "Pete" Peterson.

Jack Dietz knew the value of first-rate special effects. Three years earlier, he had produced THE BEAST FROM 20,000 FATHOMS and sold it to Warners. (Dietz's most significant contribution to screen horror was in restoring Bela Lugosi's star power by headlining him in such bottom-of-the-barrel cheapies as 1943's THE APE MAN, 1943's GHOSTS ON THE LOOSE, and 1944's RETURN OF THE APE MAN, which he co-produced in partnership with Sam Katzman, under the Banner Films label for Monogram.) Hoping to repeat the success of THE BEAST FROM 20,000 FATHOMS, Dietz enlisted the services of its director, French-born Eugene Lourie. Lourie did some preliminary work on the effects with O'Brien and Peterson, but dropped out of the production after a conflict with one of the producers. (Soon after, Lourie, O'Brien, and Peterson regrouped for 1958's THE GIANT BEHEMOTH, a virtual remake of THE BEAST.)

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Heading up a scientific investigation in Mexico to study the effects of a volcanic eruption of major proportions, American geologist Dr. Hank Scott and his associate, university professor Dr. Arturo Ramos, head for San Lorenzo, a tiny village virtually isolated by the catastrophe. On the outskirts of the village, the two scientists encounter a grim scene: a decimated farmhouse whose inhabitants have mysteriously vanished save for a lone infant, and the bodies of two police officers, their gazes transfixed in horror. An inexplicable wailing sound pervades the night air like a mist.

Arriving in San Lorenzo, Hank and Ramos report their findings to Father Delgado, learning that the tragedy is only the latest in a series of deadly incidents that have taken place since the volcano erupted. Another local farm family has inexplicably vanished without a trace, and a little girl and several cattle ranchers have been found dead with the same look of horror etched on their faces. The superstitious villagers believe these deeds to be the work of the "demon bull," a symbol of evil common among ancient civilizations. An autopsy on the two policemen reveals the presence of insect venom in their blood.

Driving back into the mountains, Hank and Ramos meet Teresa Alvarez, whose cattle ranch, Mia Flores, teeters on the verge of bankruptcy. Teresa's cattle have been turning up dead,

presumably from eating poisonous weeds, and many ranchhands have deserted her out of fear. At the volcano site, Ramos retrieves a lava rock containing a live scorpion hundreds of years old.

That night, a party of telephone linemen working to restore power to Mia Flores is savagely attacked by a horde of mammoth scorpions. Lone survivors of a prehistoric age, the incredibly huge arachnids have been freed from the bowels of the Earth by the volcanic activity, surfacing each night to feed on the local populace. Driven to a frenzy by blood lust, the scorpions devour the linemen and savage Mia Flores before turning their attention to San Lorenzo, sending the horrified villagers scurrying to the safety of the hills.

Hank and Ramos join forces with the renowned Dr. Velasco in endeavoring to destroy the marauders, who have retreated to the underground caves. They conclude that poison gas, pumped into the only exit, which had been opened by an earthquake, would be the best means to eliminate the antediluvian creatures.

Armed to the teeth with gas tanks and clad in protective clothing, Hank and Ramos are lowered into the dark shaft via an elevator car. There they discover a veritable lost world inhabited by mammoth scorpions, earthworms, and spiders. Lording triumphantly over this prehistoric menagerie is the colossal Black Scorpion. Aptly dubbed by Hank as the "granddaddy of them all," the creature kills its slimy cohabitants by sticking its poisonous stinger into their throats.

The enraged scorpion then turns its attention to the elevator car, severing its cable and leaving the scientists stranded. Complicating the situation further is the surprise appearance of a stow-away, little Juanito, a young boy living at Mia Flores who has become attached to Hank. The child barely escapes being eaten alive by a giant trapdoor spider (a refugee from KING KONG's censored spider-pit sequence). Hank, Ramos, and Juanito are lifted out of the cavern on the dangling cable in the nick of time. The shaft is sealed off with dynamite; Velasco and company are satisfied that the monsters have been buried alive.

However, their optimism proves to be premature. On the outskirts of Mexico City, an express train from Monterey is derailed by the blood-thirsty scorpions. Many of the horrified survivors of the crash are devoured by the giant insects, who, in turn, are stung to death by their leader.

Arriving in Mexico City, Hank and Ramos confer with Velasco, who deduces that the scorpions had fled into an underground shelter during the explosions and have been burrowing in the tunnels under the capital city ever since. Working closely with the military, the scientists devise an electrically-charged harpoon gun capable of sending out 600,000 volts of power.

Driven by hunger, the king of the scorpions launches an all-out attack on Mexico City, devastating the teeming metropolis at every turn. The military, using truckloads of raw meat, lures the rampaging monster into a deserted coliseum. Armed with the harpoon gun, Hank and Ramos jockey for position as the beast brings down a circling helicopter. As the scorpion reaches into the sky for another chopper, Hank fires the harpoon into the creature's throat, sending thousands of volts of electricity through its body.

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Set in Mexico, a land whose stark beauty and accessibility made it for decades a choice locale of Hollywood production crews, THE BLACK SCORPION began principal live-action photography in November 1956, continued through the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays, and wrapped shortly after the 1957 New Year. Prior to the start of filming, O'Brien conferred with fellow effects specialist Ralph Hammeras, who was working on the (ultimately disastrous) trick-work for Columbia's THE GIANT CLAW (1957) in Mexico. Hammeras influenced O'Brien's decision to shoot his animation footage on location, both for the





**LEFT:** The mock-up of *THE BLACK SCORPION*'s face does little justice to the splendid monster brought to life by stop-motion legend Willis O'Brien. **BELOW:** In two of the film's most thrilling scenes, the elephantine arachnid attacks a train (shades of King Kong) and a tank.

sake of authenticity and to lower costs. O'Brien and Peterson set up shop at the Tepeac Studio in Mexico City. Hammeras volunteered to help create the necessary miniatures and paint backgrounds. O'Brien and his crew of technicians toiled for about three months; living and working conditions were so threadbare that they left Mexico to complete the stop-motion sequences in the garage of Peterson's California home.

The initial concept for *THE BLACK SCORPION* has long been a subject of speculation. Bill Warren, author of the classic two-volume work on 50s and 60s sci-fi, *Keep Watching the Skies* (McFarland, 1982) recounted a questionable report that the film was inspired by a test reel created by Willis O'Brien and Peter Peterson—specifically, the hair-raising sequence in which the scorpions attack the telephone linemen. According to this anecdote, Melford and Dietz were so taken by this footage that they commissioned writers to construct a screenplay around it. Warren doubts the veracity of this story, citing the fact that there was no reference to the trial footage in Don Shay's comprehensive piece on the animator in a past issue of *Focus on Film* (No. 16, Autumn, 1973). On the other hand, there is in existence an incomplete sequence featuring a reptilian creature attacking a small shack, completed by Peterson under O'Brien's supervision, which may

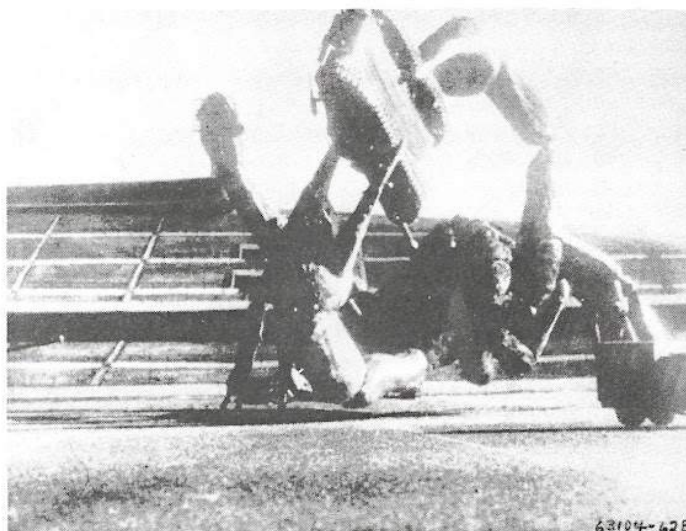
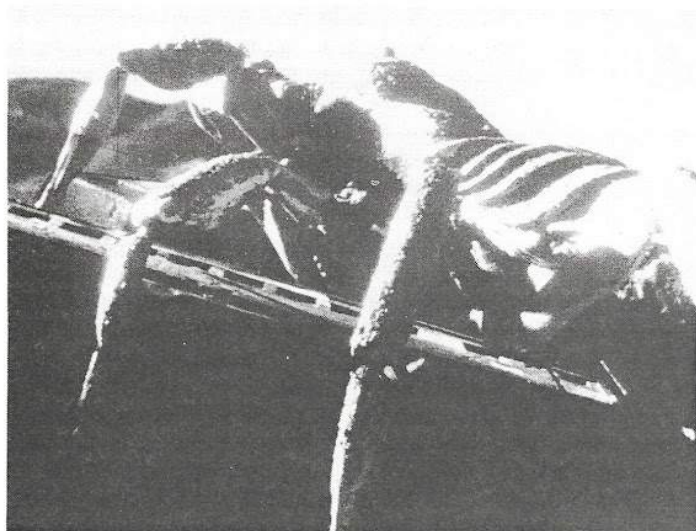
have been staged on the same miniature set used later in *THE BLACK SCORPION*.

Veteran science-fiction/horror screenwriter/novelist David Duncan (1957's *THE MONSTER THAT CHALLENGED THE WORLD*, 1958's *MONSTER ON THE CAMPUS*, 1960's *THE TIME MACHINE*) shared screenplay credit with Robert Blees. In an interview with Tom Weaver, Duncan admitted that his memories of working on the script have dimmed with time. (He has, in fact, never bothered to see the movie.) Regarding the alleged trial footage, Duncan didn't have a clue. "I seem to recall there was an unusable script on hand . . . I remember a huge floppy spider that producer Jack Dietz insisted on introducing far sooner than I thought it should be."

The "unusable script" to which Duncan refers was most likely the effort of co-writer Blees. An odd choice to draft the screenplay for a sci-fi exploitation picture, Blees' forte was glossy soap operas. His previous credits included such popular tearjerkers as *PAID IN FULL* (1950), *ALL I DESIRE* (1953), *MAGNIFICENT OBSESSION* (1954), and *AUTUMN LEAVES* (1956). After *THE BLACK SCORPION*, Blees co-wrote the sleazy classic *HIGH SCHOOL CONFIDENTIAL!* (1958), and then occasionally revisited the genre with *FROM THE EARTH TO THE MOON* (1958), *WHO EVER SLEW AUNTIE ROO?* (1971), and the second and last of the Vincent Price Dr. Phibes sagas, *DR. PHIBES RISES AGAIN* (1972).

Similarities between *THE BLACK SCORPION* and *THEM!* are inescapable; it almost appears that Ted Sherdeman's script for *THEM!* was used as a blueprint in an optimistic effort to reap the same financial success. For starters, both pictures begin on an atmospheric note, in the strange, forbidding desert country (a pet setting of auteur Jack Arnold, whose *TARANTULA* also seems to have been combed for useful story elements. As in *THEM!*, which begins so memorably with a traumatized little girl dazedly walking through the wilderness, the sole witness to the scorpion's first deadly attack is unable to speak: an infant child. (In both *THE BLACK SCORPION* and *THEM!*, as well as in David Duncan's

*Continued on page 52*





## Richard Denning Remembers

# THE BLACK SCORPION

**Richard Denning:** Before I went down to Mexico for that picture, Evie [Denning's actress wife, Evelyn Ankers] and I had started building a new house in the Hollywood Hills. I could have used the money they were going to pay me because I wanted to put it into the house. So I asked Evie, "Can you handle things while I'm doing the picture?" and she said she could. Evie could always do anything. So she took over the house, and I went down to Mexico.

**Scarlet Street:** Your co-star was Mara Corday . . .

**RD:** Mara stated to get very friendly. I'm down there over Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's—and she got friendlier all the time! And she was getting more and more attractive to me all the time!

**SS:** Corday's husband, actor Richard Long, accompanied her to Mexico City.

**RD:** That didn't seem to bother Mara—so I was getting less and less concerned about it! (Laughs) Finally I got on the phone and I called Evie and told her, "I think you better come down here." "Why?" she asked. I said, "Well, there's a girl on the show and I'm afraid something's gonna happen." "I'll be right down!" she said. So she comes down, and after all these weeks away from her I'm ready—you know what I mean? (Laughs) But first we go out to dinner. Evie loved oysters, and, of course, in Mexico they're cheap, so she had about a dozen and a half oysters, filet mignon, champagne—the whole bit. Now we're ready to go back to the Hotel Bamer in Mexico City and make up for lost time. I put my arms around her and all of a sudden (Denning pretends to be on the verge of vomiting) she says, "Excuse me!" and runs off. Well, she was sick in bed for four days! (Laughs)

**SS:** What were conditions like filming *THE BLACK SCORPION* on location?

**RD:** We shot out in villages, and I remember one day we had box lunches out in this village, outside of Mexico City. We broke for lunch and we're having sandwiches. I went to take a bite, and the flies were so thick on the sandwich I had to blow them away before I could take a bite, and hope I wasn't getting too many flies! We were in the town center, and it's the town rest room—there's no sanitation. You walk in there, and you just try to find a place to step so you're not stepping on a recent pile. And the flies are all over.

**SS:** Tell us about the crew.

**RD:** The cameraman was Lionel Lindon. At the time, he lived on Scotch. We'd break for lunch and he'd just go to the bar and drink Scotch. He'd say, "My ulcers are so bad, I

can't keep the food down. Scotch relaxes me." He was just skin and bones. Nice guy; we'd all get a kick out of him. Edward Ludwig, our director, was a very nice guy, too. He had this German accent and when he was at a loss to tell you anything else, he'd say, "I need a little more nuance!" That was his favorite expression . . . If he wanted to do another take, he'd say, "Let's try it with a little more nuance!" Ludwig didn't tell you anything . . . it was the same advice to everybody.

**SS:** Have you any other anecdotes you want to share about *THE BLACK SCORPION*?

**RD:** I was recuperating from *THE MAGNIFICENT MATADOR* down there. I had gotten hepatitis and intestinal amoeba and I was doctoring it for a year. When we went down to do *THE BLACK SCORPION*, I was still on a steak-and-baked-potato diet. I remember that well!

**SS:** How about your other co-stars?

**RD:** I enjoyed Carlos Rivas.

Of course, he couldn't understand why we couldn't drink the water. "I don't understand why you get seek. I don't get seek! I eat it all the time!" So, about a year later, he came up to Hollywood to do a picture, and I bumped into him. He said, "Oh, I'm so seek! Your water!" I told him, "I eat it all the time!" (Laughs) Mario Navarro was wonderful. I loved that little kid . . . he was a real sweet guy, and talented. He took direction well; no problem. He was like my own kid. A good kid, I have very fond memories of him.

**SS:** Having made your share of them, what do you think of sci-fi and monster films?

**RD:** I'd pick up some of these science-fiction scripts and I'd think to myself, "This could be good if the special effects are done right." Boy, that is the key, to have good special effects like *UNKNOWN ISLAND* did, or *THE BLACK SCORPION*. For those days, I felt that they had excellent effects, and I think the men who do that sort of thing are really marvelous. I'm still fascinated with the special effects when you realize that was 35 years ago. Today, sure, it's no big thing. At the time I was in Mexico, they had another unit working on the special effects with a special director in another studio. We never met Willis O'Brien. When I saw the movie cut together, I was very impressed. I thought, "How the heck did they do all this?" It was the old process screen. We were reacting to the image on the process screen, or nothing. In my next life, I'll probably come back as a special-effects man.



Richard Denning with child actor Mario Navarro.





*Carlos Rivas, Mara Corday, and Richard Denning take a breather from battling oversized scorpions to stare with awe at a pool table. Yes, siree, they got trouble . . .*

THE MONSTER THAT CHALLENGED THE WORLD, children come dangerously close to becoming bite-size victims.) Like the giant ants, the scorpions make their early strikes many miles from civilization before invading heavily populated areas.

Both *THE BLACK SCORPION* and *THEM!* build a head of steam in methodical fashion. Edward Ludwig, veteran of 24 years on the Hollywood scene, director of everything from such John Wayne war epics as *THE FIGHTING SEABEES* (1944) to such colorful escapist entertainment as *FLAME OF THE ISLANDS* (1955), follows the example of *THEM!* director Gordon Douglas by purposely delaying the first appearance of the monsters, baiting us with weird clues and, in the case of *THE BLACK SCORPION*,

old superstitions to build suspense. Unlike that of Jack Arnold, who might have brought more dimension to the formulaic material, Ludwig's craftsmanlike direction compares favorably with the efforts of stop-motion film directors Robert Gordon and Nathan Juran: serviceable but unremarkable. Once the beasts show their stingers, the resemblance between *THE BLACK SCORPION* and *THEM!* becomes even more apparent. The underground lairs of the scorpions/ants are penetrated and dynamited and the monsters are presumed destroyed. Shortly thereafter, eyewitness accounts surface indicating that the scorpions/ants have tunneled out of their lairs and begun a renewed reign of terror. Finally, both pictures end in a burst of violence as major cities come under siege. (Just when you thought it was safe to venture back into the desert, MGM foisted another *THEM!* ripoff on the moviegoing public with the notorious *NIGHT OF THE LEPUS*, a 1972 quickie that left no cliché unturned in its ludicrous attempt to lend murderous tendencies to cute little Easter bunnies.)

*THE BLACK SCORPION* boasts jaw-dropping special effects, among the most gruesome since *KING KONG*. O'Brien's influence is sharply felt in such powerful scenes as the brutal attack of the scorpions on the telephone linemen, the massacre of the express train (several hapless victims are hoisted high in the air and fought over by the giants like prizes in a shooting gallery), and the thrilling showdown in the arena between prehistoric monster and modern man. At this stage of his career, O'Brien was personally doing little of the actual animation; most of the grunt work was done by Peterson. (Only recently, O'Brien's stop-motion talents had been grievously neglected by the Nassour Bros. when the independent producers loosely adapted one of his short

## Carlos Rivas Remembers *THE BLACK SCORPION*

In Mexico, Carlos Rivas starred in over 20 features, winning Mexico's People's Choice Award for his performance in *DE CARNE SOMOS* (1955). In Hollywood, he first gained attention for his portrayal of the young prince in Rodgers and Hammerstein's *THE KING AND I* (1956). He appeared in over 24 features and dozens of TV shows. At Alfred Hitchcock's insistence, Rivas was cast as a Cuban revolutionary in *TOPAZ* (1969).

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*Scarlet Street: How did you get your start in films?*

Carlos Rivas: While on my honeymoon in Mexico City, with my wife, romance novelist Sylvia Grieg [author of *Escape Me Never* and *Midnight Gold*], I was approached to do a short film based on the Brothers Grimm, *JARINDA AND JARINGEL*. The film was seen by Filmex studio executives and I signed a studio contract.

*SS: You were in THE KING AND I . . .*

CR: While [performing] in a play, *MOLIERE*, I was asked to go to Hollywood for a screen test for *THE KING AND I*, after

which I did the film. I feel that I was very lucky to be bilingual . . . both Mexico and Hollywood offered me equal opportunities.

*SS: Tell us about THE BLACK SCORPION.*

CR: The special effects were exceptional. We actors were well aware of the way the scorpions looked; we were shown photos and drawings previous to the shoot. I enjoyed making *THE BLACK SCORPION* very much indeed.

*SS: And your co-stars?*

CR: I got along very well with Richard and Mara; in fact, I see Mara once in a while to this day. I enjoyed working with Mario Navarro very much. He was a swell kid and a trouper. He grew up to be a doctor and now practices medicine in Mexico City.

*SS: What have you been doing recently?*

CR: I recently returned home to West Hollywood from Mexico City after a film assignment. My daughter Carla [Weber] was set designer on both *GAS, FOOD AND LODGING* and *MI VIDA LOCA*, and I did cameos on both pictures. The first picture won an honorable mention at the Sundance Film Festival.

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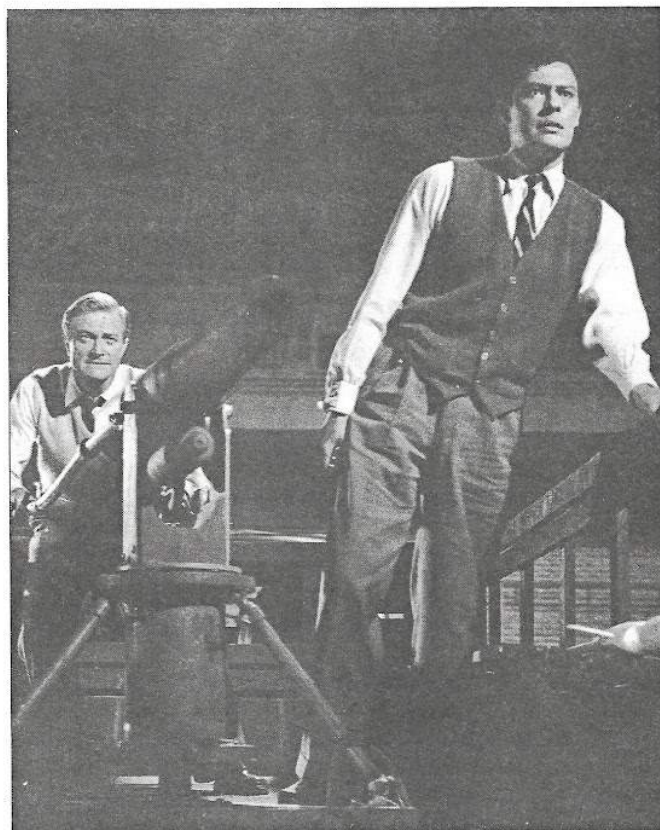
stories for 1956's *THE BEAST OF HOLLOW MOUNTAIN*. Effects specialists Jack Rabin and Louis DeWitt did a very credible job utilizing a new photographic process, "Regiscope," a code word for replacement animation.)

Not all of the trick-work in *THE BLACK SCORPION* is faultless, however. As was often the case with effects movies, awkward-looking mock-ups were created for close-ups and publicity purposes. (Remember that awful giant spider prop in *TARANTULA*?) All too often, the camera cuts away from the stop-motion action to focus on a ludicrously-designed giant scorpion head (Dietz's "floppy spider?") totally inconsistent with the fine model work surrounding it. Another major faux pas is an empty traveling matte of the mother of all scorpions, seen fleetingly in its attacks on San Lorenzo and Mexico City, which, according to Bill Warren, was left in the final cut for budgetary reasons.

But the most common gripe leveled against *THE BLACK SCORPION* (and deservedly so) is the murky, sometimes almost impenetrable (day-for-night?) photography that needlessly obscures the effects-work. The lion's share of the blame goes to Oscar-winning cameraman Lionel Lindon (1956's *AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS*), who should have known better. On a picture with inferior effects, this practice is understandable, but on one whose greatest strength is the quality of its trick-work, it is unforgivable. (One trade reviewer beefed that the film might not have projected satisfactorily on drive-in screens!)

In the pantheon of science-fiction heroes, Richard Denning shares center stage with such beloved stalwarts as John Agar, Richard Carlson, and Jeff Morrow. Except for those relatively rare occasions when he was cast against type (i.e., as the ruthlessly ambitious Mark Williams in 1954's *THE CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON*), Denning's portrayals usually reflected his own persona: virile yet mellow, an all-around decent, likeable guy. Whether he was battling primordial beasts or atom-brained zombies, Denning did his utmost to make you "believe," even under the most unlikely circumstances. On the distaff side of fantastic-film fame, Mara Corday, a pert package of beauty and brains, quite capably passes herself off as the señorita of a struggling cattle ranch. Playing opposite such monstrosities as *TARANTULA* and *THE GIANT CLAW* didn't daunt the fiery actress, whose tempestuous marriage to the late actor Richard Long made juicy gossip-column copy. That unsung hero, the partner/best friend of the leading man, was the role in which darkly handsome Latin actor Carlos Rivas found himself in both *THE BLACK SCORPION* and *THE BEAST OF HOLLOW MOUNTAIN* (opposite Guy Madison). The Mexican-born Rivas got his first important career break on the New York stage; he then alternated between the States and his native country, acting in both motion pictures and TV. Rivas' most prominent screen role was not as a Latin, but as an Oriental: the ill-fated Lun Tha, slave girl Rita Moreno's lover in *THE KING AND I* (1956). Little Mario Navarro, along with Charles Herbert, deserves the title "sci-fi's most-put-upon kid." Almost eaten alive by *THE BEAST OF HOLLOW MOUNTAIN*, Mario survives a like fate here. Unlike Herbert, Navarro was never self-conscious or stilted before the camera; he gave a sensitive performance in *THE BEAST* and a similarly engaging one here. From all evidence, Mario's motion-picture career was a brief one; his last role in an American-made film was that of an Indian youth fighting opposite Chuck Connors in *GERONIMO* (1962).

*John Brunas, co-author of Universal Horrors (McFarland, 1990), is a long-time contributor to horror and mystery magazines. His research associate on this article was Tom Weaver, author of Poverty Row Horrors (McFarland, 1992).*



*Richard Denning and Carlos Rivas man the gun that finally brings doom to **THE BLACK SCORPION** (1957).*

Granted, *THE BLACK SCORPION* is clichéd and formula-bound, but that doesn't diminish its powerful horror sequences and wonderful effects one whit. Seeing the film today, its cozy familiarity—from the corny, doom-laden prologue to the harrowing but predictable climax—is gratifying. *THE BLACK SCORPION* hearkens back to those magic-filled, all-night horror shows at the neighborhood drive-in.



## THE BLACK SCORPION

### Credits

A Frank Melford-Jack Dietz Production, presented by Warner Bros. Released in October, 1957. Produced by Frank Melford and Jack Dietz. Director: Edward Ludwig. Screenplay: David Duncan and Robert Blees. Story: Paul Yawitz. Director of Photography: Lionel Lindon. Music composed and conducted by Paul Sawtell. Orchestrations: Bert Shefter. Electronic Music: Jack Cookerly. Art Director: Edward Fitzgerald. Supervisor of Special Effects: Willis O'Brien. Animation: Peter Peterson. Supervising Film Editor: Richard L. Van Enger. Sound: Rafael L. Esparza. Sound Effects: Mandine Rogne. Assistant Directors: Ray Heinze and Jaime Contreras. Running time: 88 minutes.

### Cast

Richard Denning (Dr. Hank Scott), Mara Corday (Teresa Alvarez), Carlos Rivas (Prof. Arturo Ramos), Mario Navarro (Juanito), Carlos Muzquiz (Dr. Velazco), Pascual Garcia Pena (Dr. Jose de la Cruz), Fanny Schiller (Florentina), Pedro Galvan (Father Delgado), Arturo Martinez (Major Cosio).



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# The Ignoble Bachelor

David Stuart Davies on location  
with Jeremy Brett et al.

Within weeks of filming *THE SUSSEX VAMPIRE*—now called *SHERLOCK HOLMES AND THE LAST VAMPIRE*—work commenced on the second of Granada's two-hour Holmes productions this year, *THE NOBLE BACHELOR* (retitled *THE MISTRESS OF GLAVEN*). This will be the 35th Granada film, and the really filmable stories have already been exhausted. They are now working purely on titles and ideas from the Canon, with experienced writers concocting, contriving, and converting in order to produce smart, Conan Doyle inspired pastiches. Apparently "The Noble Bachelor" was initially chosen as a story for such treatment because it was to be directed by Peter Hammond, who has "a special talent for photographing society scenes and beautiful women." Those who saw *THE MASTER BLACKMAILER* will not wish to quibble with that



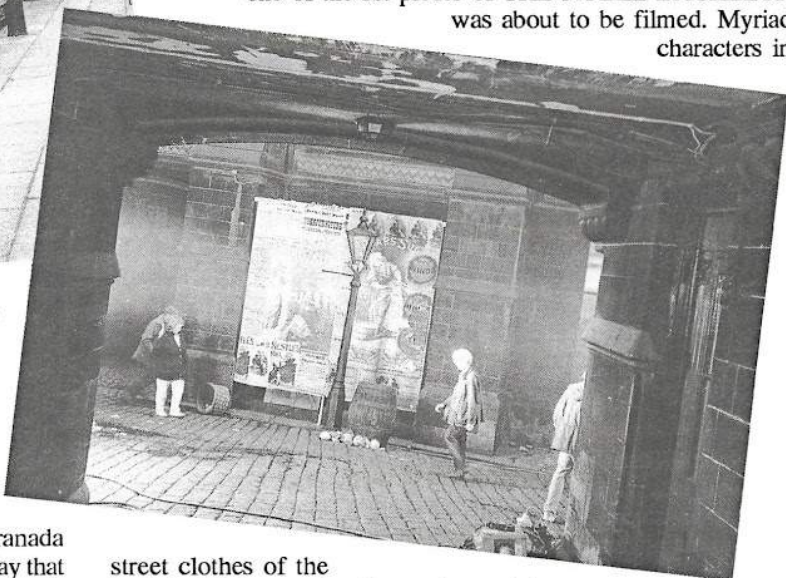
statement, but it certainly seems an odd, not to say inadequate, reason for choosing the tale. Conan Doyle's story is slight and somewhat predictable. Bert Coules, the writer who dramatized it for BBC Radio two years ago, had difficulty spinning out the slender plot to 45 minutes. There is no real villain, and the eponymous aristocrat is merely a milk-and-water weakling who generates little sympathy.

Trevor Bowen, who was brought in to script the Granada piece, had many problems working up a 100-minute screenplay that presented a suitable mystery, afforded Holmes some detective work, and yet remained true to the spirit, if not the letter, of the original. The script, which was to have been ready on the first of June, arrived six weeks late after five—count 'em—five drafts. Bowen has not quite as sure a hand with the Holmes stories as Jeremy Paul, having in the past provided not only interesting versions of "The Priory School" and "The Disappearance of Lady Frances Carfax" (each differing considerably from the original), but also the limp *HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES*. However, there are many pleasing touches in his new screenplay.

Lord St. Simon (Simon Williams) is redrawn as a cunning and vicious blackguard. Although regarded as an aristocratic bachelor, it is revealed that he has been married twice before becoming engaged to Hattie (re-named Henrietta) Doran (played by Paris Jefferson). The previous marriages were carried out in the private chapel on his estate (the Glaven of the new title) and not announced publicly. Both marriages ended tragically in suspicious circumstances. Lord St. Simon is indeed an *ignoble* bachelor, and this is an interesting, intriguing, and effective re-working of the original.

There is, however, one thing that worries me about the adaptation: the shift in Holmes' character. Once more he is behaving oddly, snapping at Mrs. Hudson, ignoring Watson, haunted by dreams, and generally presented *in extremis*. I can see how this injection of emotional turmoil into the persona of Sherlock Holmes pleases Jeremy Brett, for it affords him an opportunity to act, to deliver more than the traditional "Elementary, my dear Watson" version of Holmes. Brett also believes that the latest scripts afford a subtler and more detailed analysis of the man himself.

On a grim day in September, I found myself outside the Town Hall in Manchester, a stone's throw from Granada Studios. It was in a courtyard here, suitably sooty and Victorian, that one of the set pieces of *THE NOBLE BACHELOR* was about to be filmed. Myriad characters in



street clothes of the period milled around as the smoke-machine man practiced his "pea-souper effect" and the lighting men fiddled with their spots to create a suitably eerie atmosphere. Once again I was impressed by Granada's attention to detail: Actors' scarves were changed if deemed inappropriate, hats were abandoned for better effect, fruit was muddled for realism, extra grime was applied to the cobbles for greater authenticity, and tableaux of low life were struck and reformed until right.

Beyond this activity, through a dark archway, sitting on an incongruous beach chair and smoking a very modern cigarette, I





**LEFT:** Jeremy Brett rests between takes with a grimy little street urchin on his lap. **RIGHT:** Sherlock Holmes (Jeremy Brett) wanders the dank, foggy streets of London while he ponders the strange dream that plagues him. **PREVIOUS PAGE:** On location for *THE MISTRESS OF GLAVEN* outside Manchester Town Hall.

found Jeremy Brett, ready as Holmes for the call of "action." He was in a fulsome mood and we had a long conversation, during which he expressed his developing views on the character, the future of his alter ego, and his thoughts on the new show.

He began by confirming his opinion that the two-hour format was right for the Holmes series. "Two hours gives you a chance to breathe real detail into the plots and, of course, Victorian England is loved by the world and we're able to show more of it in two hours." Brett also opined that the developments in the scripting were not only inevitable but appropriate. "I've played this character for 10 years, and what I've got to do now is trust that I've absorbed enough that I can sustain Doyle through the evergreen world of the adapters."

There still remains the problem of deductions—the lack of detective work, which Brett was concerned about while filming *THE LAST VAMPIRE*. "In *THE NOBLE BACHELOR*, a woman arrives at the door of Baker Street and, by the time she appears in the room upstairs, rather like with the hat in *THE BLUE CARBUNCLE*, I deduce from a small account book of hers I've found in the street, many details—the essence of her. I say, 'This book is like the membrane of a little butterfly. In these pages is the life of this woman. First of all, she is destitute. On this page see how she shows the rage she feels. See how the nib has torn the page.' And so on. Later, I deduce that she reads great writers: Sophocles, Jane Austen, Emily Bronte. Now that is very exciting for me because it's new, yet it is Doyle."

However, while filling in the old Holmes, there are expansions, too: "He has these dreams, a recurring dream, precognition, really, and he begins to sketch the dream out." It is at this point in the plot that Watson arrives back in Baker Street from a seminar to find Holmes locked up in his room, with a concerned Mrs. Hudson waiting outside. Watson enters the sitting room to find his friend on a pile of cushions, exhausted. The doctor suspects drugs, a touch that Brett wanted to include despite his dramatic rejection of cocaine in *THE DEVIL'S FOOT*. But cocaine is not the cause of this reaction; it is the strange dreams. I suggested to Brett that, like the seven-percent solution, these vivid nightmares gave Holmes that dangerous, unstable edge. He agreed, saying, "It is a departure. We are moving into a space we have never been in before. We now have Holmes picturing the future. When he's actually on the case and he sees locations and, in particular, a large chair with the material shredded,

exactly as in his dreams, it becomes really gripping. I don't know what the Doyleans will think of it, but it is so very exciting."

Brett seems to have been on a roller-coaster ride with Holmes. I well remember, toward the end of the London run of the Jeremy Paul play *THE SECRET OF SHERLOCK HOLMES*, hearing him announce in a radio interview that when the play was over he was finishing with Sherlock Holmes for good. Yet, three years later, here he is, talking with great enthusiasm about the character and clearly fascinated with the potential that still remains in portraying the Baker Street Brain. Not only does he foresee a further three episodes next year—no titles—but he is also keen to get another Sherlock Holmes play off the ground:

"I had a germ of an idea, literally two weeks ago. First of all, I want to show the brilliance of the man, so I envisage, at the opening, a 25-minute monologue, at speed, recalling 15 cases: a sort of *tour de force* of the brilliance of his brain. This is just to show the speed of him. It's like a talking mouth; an internal mantra. Then when he finishes, he turns, observes his friend at the table and says, 'Ah, Watson, breakfast!'"

This seemed to me a wonderful opening, but I wondered where the play would go from here. "Tibet," Brett assured me. "It's to do with what happened when he got there—how he emptied his brain and purified his system with water, the simplest foods, the purest air, and the torment he went through trying to do it." At this point I remarked that, the way he was describing things, it seemed that he could, in dramatic terms, do without Watson in this play. "Oh, no. Watson, I think, has been to Vienna and he listens. He takes on the role of counsellor during this investigation of the inner workings of Sherlock Holmes."

The exciting thing about this conversation was that it was quite clear to me that, while Jeremy Brett was talking about this project, he was verbalizing ideas that had only just come to him. This became even clearer when he described his concept of the ending: "Holmes says to Watson, 'Come on, old friend, are you ready? We have to be at Victoria Station soon.' I hold up two tickets. 'Where are we going, Holmes?' 'To Afghanistan, my dear friend.'"

Whether this fascinating play will ever see the light of day is debatable. Indeed, I'm not sure whether the theatregoing public wants to see another play analyzing the complex nature of the

*Continued on page 100*



# the NEWS HOUND

The Hound welcomes you back to his musty multimedia lair and hopes that the New Year brings lots of suspenseful surprises. Herewith are some pulse-pounding previews:

Francis Ford Coppola will follow the lavish *BRAM STOKER'S DRACULA* with *MARY SHELLEY'S FRANKENSTEIN*. This time Coppola will act as producer, turning over directorial reins to Kenneth Branagh (*HENRY V*, *DEAD AGAIN*), who will also perform the role of the good Doctor F. Now in preproduction, the film will shoot in England and Prague this spring for a projected Christmas 1993 release. Jumping the ghoulish gun is cable czar Ted Turner, who has already completed a version of the Shelley tale, likely to premiere at any moment on his TNT network. Patrick Bergin and Randy Quaid star as doctor and patient in this adaptation, which was directed by David Wickes, who helmed the recent CBS telefilm *JACK THE RIPPER*.

Count Dracula, meanwhile, has inspired more vampiric activity, as we'll soon see in these independent productions: A fashion photographer discovers why his top model prefers nighttime shoots in *THE GIRL WITH THE HUNGRY EYES*. . . . Russell Mulcahy directs the Republic Pictures thriller *99 DAYS*; that's how long vampire victims have to bump off their attacker before growing their own set of pointy teeth. . . . Bloody babushkas abound in *BLOOD SUCKERS*, a Russian production from Lenfilm, featuring a vampire grandmother. (Nana, what's that in the borscht?)

Other intriguing independents awaiting release include *THE COOL SURFACE*, starring Robert Patrick (the mercurial villain in *TERMINATOR 2*) as a novelist whose fiction comes frighteningly to life; *THE HOUR OF THE PIG*, a murder mystery set in medieval France and starring Ian Holm and Donald Pleasence; and *SKETCH ARTIST*, a suspense story about a police composite artist (Jeff Fahey) who ends up drawing his own wife as a murder suspect. Sean Young and Drew Barrymore co-star. The ubiquitous Drew will also be seen in *DOPPELGÄNGER*, in which she'll be pursued by a vindictive ghostly double. Sally Kellerman co-stars in this ITC thriller.

Christopher Plummer and Martin Landau star in *FIREHEAD*, about a Russian psychic who plans to start World War

Three by just thinking about it. . . . *DANGEROUS DESIRE* stars TV's Richard Grieco as a man "who is injected with cat genes in an attempt to cure his illness, but is transformed into a ruthless killer." (Never mind that . . . look at what he's doing to the couch.)

*STEPHEN KING'S NEEDFUL THINGS* has completed principal photography in Vancouver, with Fraser Heston (son of Moses) at the helm and a screenplay by *BUCKAROO BANZAI*'s W. D. Richter. Ed Harris, Bonnie Bedelia, and Max Von Sydow star. . . . Also wrapping



is *HOCUS POCUS*, a Halloweenish comedy from Disney, with Bette Midler and Sarah Jessica Parker as 17th-century witches transported to 20th-century Salem, Massachusetts. . . . The Ira Levin high-rise thriller *SLIVER*, directed by Australian Phillip Noyce (*DEAD CALM*), has finished shooting in New York. *BASIC INSTINCT* alumna Sharon Stone and scriptwriter Joe Eszterhas are on hand for this production, to be released this May.

The New Year will be a marvelous one for Marvel Comics, with *THE FANTASTIC FOUR*, from Roger Corman's Concorde Pictures, scheduled to start production at press time. Also in development for 1994: features starring Marvel heroes Wolverine and Spiderman. "Spidey" is due to receive top-notch treatment from director James Cameron for a Summer 1994 release from Tri-Star.

*THE FUGITIVE* escapes from 60s TV limbo, with Harrison Ford starring as the road-weary Dr. Richard Kimble. Shooting begins in late January for the Warner Bros. feature. . . . Also due to begin production are *THE SHADOW* from

producer Martin Bregman and a new version of *THE GHOST AND MRS. MUIR* from 20th Century Fox.

HBO's hellish host, the Crypt Keeper, will be a busy bag of bones when production begins on the first of three *TALES FROM THE CRYPT* theatrical features. The producers of the pay-cable series have decided to terrorize local theatres, with Walter Hill, Richard Donner, and Robert Zemeckis each taking a directorial turn. Hill's segment will be first, debuting later this year; Donner may be next, once he completes work on Anne Rice's *THE WITCHING HOUR*.

Tall, dark, and hideous leading man *GODZILLA* is making a comeback in a big way (the only way he knows). In addition to his latest Japanese release, *GODZILLA VS. MOTHRA*, this Renaissance lizard is poised to make a Stateside splash courtesy of Tri-Star, who negotiated with Toho Studios for the rights to produce new adventures featuring Big G and his friends.

In a smooth segue to news of the legitimate stage. . . . Monarch of Menace Stephen King now haunts London's West End, where a stage version of his novel *Misery* opened in December. *CAGNEY AND LACEY*'s Sharon Gless and *COMFORT AND JOY*'s Bill Paterson star; director Simon Moore penned the adaptation.

Meanwhile, back at the video store, the 1973 Dan Curtis production of *DRACULA* starring Jack Palance has been re-issued through MPI. Fans can now see for themselves the mysterious plot parallels to Coppola's version. Another unusual video vampire can be seen in John Russo's *HEARTSTOPPER*: a Pennsylvania Colonist awakens from a 200-year dirt nap to become a supernaturally powerful do-gooder. Tom Savini (who also provides FX) and Moon Zappa are featured in this Tempe Video release. Currently available for rental are the debatable pleasures of *A STRANGER AMONG US*; *TWIN PEAKS: FIRE WALK WITH ME*; *HONEY, I BLEW UP THE BABY*.

Keep a bloodshot eye peeled for the January video releases of Brian De Palma's *RAISING CAIN*, Mark Frost's political mystery *STORYVILLE*, and the cable-TV thriller *THE FEAR INSIDE*, starring an agoraphobic Christine Lahti. February will bring the Columbia/Tri-Star thriller *SINGLE WHITE FEMALE* to the shelves, along with the MCA release of Robert Zemeckis' ghoulish effects-comedy *DEATH BECOMES HER*.

The Hound thanks you once again for lending an ear (damned if he'll give it back) and hopes everything's lurking good for you in 1993.



*The News  
Hound*



# Mornings with Peter Cushing

Interview by Richard Valley

Last issue, in part one of our warm and witty interview with Peter Cushing, the veteran horror star and premier Sherlock Holmes interpreter of his generation took us on a jaunty tour of his early career—a career which included working for James Whale, parking cars in Brooklyn’s Coney Island, co-starring with Laurence Olivier in *HAMLET*, and becoming a major star of British TV. Through it all, the actor joked, he was “perpetually broke! Broke, broke, broke all the time; even playing Monopoly!” That unfortunate condition came to an abrupt and happy end in the latter half of the 1950s. “During that time,” Mr. Cushing remembered, “film people didn’t have anything to do with actors connected with television, because television was keeping audiences out of the cinema. Except one company called Hammer . . .”

**Peter Cushing:** James Carreras, with great sagacity, thought, “Now, if someone popular on television is in a film, we might be able to pull a few people into our seats.” They had been on to my agent for many, many years to see if I would do a film, but I couldn’t because I had to keep on doing television; I couldn’t do a film until a break came. And when the break came, I read in the trade paper that Hammer was going to do a remake of *FRANKENSTEIN*. I remembered, of course, seeing the original with Boris Karloff and Colin Clive, and I rang up my agent and said, “Look, that was a jolly good film; do you think they’d consider me for *Frankenstein*?” And that’s how



*Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson (Peter Cushing and Andre Morell) share an after-murder muffin in Hammer's THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES (1959).*

that connection started. I did *CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN* and it paid for itself within a week of its showing; all the profits of that went into making *DRACULA*, and that again made an enormous profit! So this snowball started to roll, and roll, and roll, and went on rolling for, what, 10 or 15 years. And Hammer became an internationally famous company, a multi-million-dollar company! And, of course, Christopher Lee and I were put on the map, both nationally and internationally! And now you can cross out “broke!” (Laughs)

**Richard Valley:** Cross out “broke” from Hammer on . . .

**PC:** One of my favorite actors, Walter Matthau, had fallen down and someone said, “Are you comfortable?” He said, “I get by.” (Laughs)

**RV:** When you played Baron Frankenstein, did you try to research medical procedures of the period?

**PC:** I think if there’s one person in the audience who knows—say a doctor or surgeon—I think they go to see it to have a good laugh. But it’s an insult to that person if you don’t use, at least, the right instrument, and pick it up in the correct way, to do whatever you’re intending. I would always do research upon that. Of course, we were very lucky. The *Frankenstein* films were all set ‘way back, you know, in the 17th or 18th century, so you weren’t hampered by having to ask, “Now, how do they do this thing today?” I used to ring up my doctor, and he would say, “Ah, I’m so glad it’s you! You’re not ill, are you? You want to take out a brain or something! Take the sherry bottle out and I’ll be ‘round after surgery.” And bless his heart, he’d come ‘round and he’d do little drawings and show me exactly how to go about it. Then the company would go to a famous firm in London who specialize in medical instruments and have the most



wonderful museum of old instruments. They were quite terrifying, quite terrifying. My God, they had syringes that looked as though they were used on an ox!

**RV:** *Modern science!* (Laughs)

**PC:** Then the studio art department would make replicas of these instruments, which we would use. Of course, unless my hands were in the shot, you never saw what I was doing, but at least one was doing the right action with the right instrument. I think that's awfully important, whatever it might be. Whether you're playing the violin, or painting, or playing the piano, or doing an operation—you must do your research. It helps the actor if you know you're doing something fairly right; it's an enormous help to you.

**RV:** *In the midst of making Gothic horror films, Hammer chose to remake THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES. You played Sherlock Holmes. Were you a fan of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's stories before you played Holmes?*

**PC:** Oh, rather! I'd read them when I was a child, and adored them. And they're something which live with you always. Now, I can't remember if I did the Hammer Sherlock Holmes film first, or whether I did the television series . . .

**RV:** *Hammer came first.*

**PC:** Did I do the Hammer version first?

**RV:** *Yes.*

**PC:** You know more about me than I do myself! (Laughs) Well, that's fine. The trouble with *THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES* as a film is that, if you think of it, Holmes is in it very, very little. He says to Watson, "You push on down and do it." Of course, he's out on that moor all the time, old Holmes, but you don't see him until almost the end of the story. They had to muck around with Conan Doyle's original a bit, which rather upset the purists, but I think that overall they did a pretty good job, didn't they?

**RV:** *Yes, they did.*

**PC:** I thought the casting of dear old Andre Morell as Dr. Watson was absolutely super.

**RV:** *I agree. In his Scarlet Street interview, Christopher Lee said there was a lot of trouble filming the finale with the hound.*

**PC:** Well, it's a special-effects man's nightmare. I mean, it's enough to make every special-effects man commit suicide on the spot! (Laughs) Dear Terence Fisher auditioned any amount of canine candidates and all they wanted to do was roll over and have their tummies tickled. Whopping great St. Bernards, you know, and Labradors—and



Photo courtesy of Deborah Del Vecchio

**Peter Cushing as Baron Frankenstein**

then they had a bright idea, which I'm afraid didn't turn out very bright in the end. They dressed up two boys—a tall one and a shorter one—in the clothes that Christopher Lee and I wore as Baskerville and Holmes, put them in a miniature set with fog all around the place, and got the biggest dog they could find. On the command "action," one of the prop men threw a hunk of meat into the middle of the set and Fido immedi-



*Faithless assistant Paul Krempe (Robert Urquhart) feels a little left out as Baron Frankenstein (Peter Cushing) shakes hands with his Creature (a waterlogged Christopher Lee) in Hammer's THE CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN (1957).*





**Christopher Lee and Peter Cushing pose between scenes with producer Josephine Douglas on the set of DRACULA 1972 A.D.**

ately leapt in. It was supposed to look as though he was leaping at Christopher and me, but he leapt upon this piece of meat and sat there eating it quite contentedly. (Laughs) So that was scrapped. In the end, they almost did it by—I mean, Terence Fisher is awfully clever, bless his own heart—they did it by shadows and effects and just trying to give the impression. I don't think the dog has ever been successful in any film of *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. I think the only way they could ever

do it is if they had enough money to pay someone like Ray Harryhausen to do an animated one; that, I think, would be superb. Otherwise, it would be difficult, terribly difficult, because sometimes Fido doesn't feel like being troubled, you know? (Laughs) Human actors do what they're told; dogs don't. Do you reckon we got away with it?

**RV:** Oh, yes. It's my favorite film version of the book.

**PC:** Have you seen any dog that you felt did come off?

**RV:** Not really. There's always a problem meeting audience expectations.

**PC:** Yes. That's the great thing, you see. It has this terrific build-up and it can only be a disappointment if it isn't something that really hits you between the eyes. Have you ever seen that marvelous picture directed by David Lean? *GREAT EXPECTATIONS*?

**RV:** Yes.

**PC:** You remember when Pip was running through the churchyard and suddenly out came the convict?

**RV:** Oh, yes!

**PC:** Well, that was one of the most terrifying moments one's ever experienced. The whole cinema audience jumped up in terrible fright. Now, that was brilliant; that's the sort of effect you want to get. I think Hammer did it awfully well with *DRACULA* when Christopher Lee came on, the perfect gentleman, giving the chap dinner, and saying, "If there's anything you want, let me know." And then a few shots later, suddenly he appeared as one of the girls was trying to give—uh, what's his name?

**RV:** John Van Eyssen?

**PC:** That's right! You know, you're better than I am! (Laughs) Anyway, one of the girls was having a go at him, and old Dracula came in and was rather cross, and Christopher got that same effect, I think; he was quite terrifying, the way he came in there like a steam train.

**RV:** It was so different from the way vampires had previously been portrayed in the movies, where they were rather slow-moving and stately. This was so energetic and violent, so sudden...

**PC:** Christopher gave it such a physical presence, yes? A physical presence which was attractive to women, but also with enormous strength, physical strength. He was absolutely brilliant as Dracula. He was quite outstandingly good. The poor old darling *did* suffer, you know; he had to wear different contact lenses as his eyes got more and more bloodshot, and in the end he said, "Look, don't bother to put them in; my own eyes are bloodshot enough!" (Laughs) He *did* suffer agonies, bless his heart. But he never complained, and he was always such a joy to work with. Love the dear fellow. And he's so funny; he has me on the floor! He rings me up once a month to report. I have to know everything that he is doing, and—have you ever heard his impersonations?

**RV:** No.

**PC:** If you ever get him on the phone again, say, "Peter Cushing said if you don't impersonate someone for me, he'll never speak to you." No, he might agree to that!

**RV:** Nonsense. (Laughs)

**PC:** Well, tell him something else, then, but get him to do Jimmy "Schnozzle"



Durante. Quite brilliant. He can also do people like Sydney Greenstreet; remember Sydney Greenstreet?

RV: Oh, yes!

PC: Lovely lines like, "Oh, you are a card, sir." (Laughs) He's quite, quite wonderful. He's such a dear old thing. He lives in London, you see, and I live down by the seaside, so we don't see each other much, but when we do—it's like with all actors—the bridge is so easily crossed.

RV: In *Bram Stoker's book, Van Helsing is an elderly Dutch professor. Was there ever any intention on your part to play it more along those lines?*

PC: There was indeed. We had a meeting about that, 'cause it bothered me quite a bit. I said, "Look, here's the description. A little old man who speaks double-Dutch. Why'd you give me this old man to play?" But at that time, you see, I'd become pretty well-known and popular in this sort of picture, and they said, "We think, from the point of view of commercialism, that you should play it as you are. It would be silly to put makeup and such all over you; there's no need." So that's how it came about. Anyway, I agreed with that, otherwise they could have got any actor who could have played it as it should have been. He's quite a little man in the story, isn't he? And really fussy! He speaks the most extraordinary English! I believe dear Laurence Olivier played him like that, didn't he?

RV: Yes.

PC: Did you see that picture?

RV: Yes.

PC: Was that the one with Frank . . .

RV: Langella.

PC: Langella; that's right. Did Larry play it that way?

RV: Yes. In fact, he was quoted as saying that he used, as his inspiration for *Van Helsing's* accent, a character actor named Albert Basserman.

PC: Oh, my! Do you remember Albert Basserman?

RV: Yes, I do.

PC: Oh! Wonderful, wonderful! I believe he was one of the people who was escaping from Hitler's purge of the Jews, wasn't he, who came over to America in the 30s? Albert Basserman; lovely actor! He didn't have any chin, did he? He was what we used to call a chinless wonder, with a sort of little fluffy mustache. Oh, how clever! And Larry was absolutely brilliant at accents. But Hammer, you see, having been known for years and years and years as a "B" picture-making company, suddenly was an enormous success with *FRANKENSTEIN*, and didn't want to lose what became a sort of team, like Laurel and Hardy, Lee and Cushing, you know? I think, from all points considered, the decision was right.

RV: *It had the advantage, too, of allowing you to take a more active part. Playing an old man, you wouldn't have been able, for example, to run across the table and pull open the curtains.*

PC: Oh, no! And one's got to bear in mind that not all that many people would have read the book, would they? Of all the millions of people who go to the theatre, I should think at the most a quarter of them would have read the book. That was a lovely bit of theatre, wasn't it, in the finale of *DRACULA*? It would have been a pity not to have it, because I always think that sort of excitement is wonderful in a film. I always remember the old Errol Flynn films; there's always some lovely, exciting, action thing that happens, and I think that's awfully important.

RV: *Oh, definitely. Had the intention been for you and Christopher Lee to re-team in BRIDES OF DRACULA, or was it planned from the beginning that he wasn't going to be in that one?*

PC: Oh, well—they wanted him, naturally, to be in all of them! But as dear Christopher said, "My parts are now becoming—well, I'm just standing in the corner, hissing." (Laughs) He said, "I would always do *Dracula* again, so long as the part in the film is a definitive *Dracula*." And he still will—'cause don't forget, *Dracula* is ageless. It doesn't matter what he looks like; Chris could go on playing *Dracula* for another 10 years, as far as his looks are concerned. I think he was quite right; he said, "If I only play *Dracula*, it's all I'm ever going to get." Though he did play *Dracula* again, several times, didn't he? But, finally, he gave up; he said, "The trouble with the poor old writers was that they had to keep ringing changes on the same scene. It was awfully difficult." Then they brought them up to date and set them in contemporary times, and Christopher said, "I refuse to be seen sitting on the number nine bus going down Kensington Heights!" (Laughs)

RV: *Now, that's a picture!*

PC: So, they had all these scenes in a rather old, Gothic church, somewhere out in the sticks. After that, he gave up playing *Dracula*. I did one in Hong Kong, as *Van Helsing*, on which he wasn't keen.

RV: *THE LEGEND OF THE SEVEN GOLDEN VAMPIRES . . .*

PC: That's right. *Dracula's* part in that was only very minor. I'm going to ask you again, who played it? John . . . ?

RV: *You know, you've got me.*

PC: Got him at last! But you can always just look it up.

RV: *That's true. [It was John Forbes-Robertson—Ed.] THE BRIDES OF DRACULA is one of the best vampire movies ever made, although *Dracula* never*

*appears in it. Instead, David Peel played Baron Meinster . . .*

PC: David Peel! That awfully nice chap, who left the business soon after that. He was always a very religious man, and I think he went into the church in some way, and he was also in properties. I think that was one reason why he gave up the business. It was quite a good picture, a very popular one. And I thought it was a very clever ending, with the shadow of the cross made by the windmill . . .

RV: *I have to tell you, that's the first movie I ever saw you in.*

PC: Oh, really?

RV: *And my first Hammer film . . .*

PC: Well! Blow me down!

RV: *I saw it in Brooklyn.*

PC: Oh, lovely. How was the bridge?

RV: *It was fine.*

PC: Not full of cars, I hope?

RV: *No.*

PC: Listen, before I forget, I must say one thing. Hammer made ever such a lot of films that had nothing to do with horror—but I thought if I'd played *Hamlet* they'd have shoved a horror ticket on it, because horror was a good thing for the cinema. They made a lovely little black-and-white picture called *CASH ON DEMAND*. Did you see that?

RV: *No.*

PC: I really think it's one of the best they made. Nothing to do with horror; no horror in it at all! It's with dear Andre Morell and me, and a group of absolutely superb actors, and it's a lovely picture. Do try and see it, 'cause I'd be very interested to know what you think about it. It's a very low-budget, black-and-white picture. And it's been frightfully, frightfully popular! I do hope you'll manage to see that somehow.

RV: *I'll look for it.*

PC: Good. Let me know what you think of it.

RV: *I will.*

PC: *SHE* was not a horror picture, either, and that was a whacking great production for Hammer, wasn't it? They went into quite a bit of production there.

RV: *Where were the desert scenes filmed?*

PC: In Israel. The Mountains of the Moon, on the Negev Desert.

RV: *Usually, with Hammer, you didn't go that far afield . . .*

PC: Ah, but they had become so successful! They'd stride out, you know? I mean, we went to the Pyrenees to Peak Dumidi to film *THE ABOM . . .*

RV: *THE ABOMINABLE SNOWMAN.*

PC: *THE ABOMINABLE SNOWMAN!* (Laughs) We went out to the Peak Dumidi. *THE ABOM*—that word I just said—it was written by Nigel Kneale, and it was called *THE CREATURE* when it was done on BBC. Hammer bought it because it was





*The star relaxes between scenes on DRACULA A.D. 1972.*

successful on television and made it into a film which they called THE ABOMINABLE—got it!—SNOWMAN. Which again was frightfully successful. But, they filmed most of it at Bray. Absolutely brilliant! Tons and tons and tons of salt, they used, for the snow.

**RV:** *That film I've seen.*

**PC:** Did you like it?

**RV:** *Very much.*

**PC:** With that darling man, Forrest Tucker. Didn't wake from his sleep. It's such a shock to the system, when people you love push off to the next world, you know? I miss him very much. You know, it's funny with actors—though you don't see 'em, you

love 'em. You want them to be there. You were asking me about the BBC Holmes.

**RV:** *We've never seen them over here. We know, really, very little beyond the fact that you made 15 for the BBC. . .*

**PC:** That's right; 16 episodes, but 15 stories, because two episodes were taken up by THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES. You see, dear boy, BBC came 'round to a time when their stock of old film was so enormous that they had to be absolutely ruthless. They didn't dare sell it, because they'd get into trouble with salaries and all sorts of things, so they literally burnt it.

**RV:** *Oh, what a crime!*

**PC:** It's awful, isn't it? I think one or two slipped out. I believe there's the one that's set at Christmas time; what's it called? With the goose?

**RV:** *THE BLUE CARBUNCLE.*

**PC:** Well done, well done! You're at it again, aren't you!

**RV:** *I'm sorry.*

**PC:** No! I like it! That one, I think, escaped the block.

**RV:** *So, we'll never see the others.*

**PC:** Much the same thing happened at Hammer. When Sir James Carreras retired from Hammer, his son Michael took over, and Michael felt that horror had had its day. He tried to do different things, but that was no good. See, Hammer had a reputation and people didn't want to see the other kind of pictures. For some reason or other—I don't know why—enormous amounts of their old stills and things were,

again, destroyed. Something I thought was terribly sad, and very unthinking, and very unlike them.

**RV:** *What a lost treasure!*

**PC:** They're worth absolute fortunes today, those stills. I have had to give up sending photographs. I just have not got any left! And they're so expensive today! I have a little thing printed with a message, which is very sincere, and I sign and send that. But I haven't got any left! And I've gotta eat! (Laughs)

**RV:** *Broke again!*

**PC:** I'd hoped you'd got that one. I thought, "If he's not laughing, I'm gonna scream!"

**RV:** *No, I'm laughing.*

**PC:** I think we could do a double act somewhere! (Laughs)

**RV:** *I think so!*

**PC:** The audience would think we're crazy.

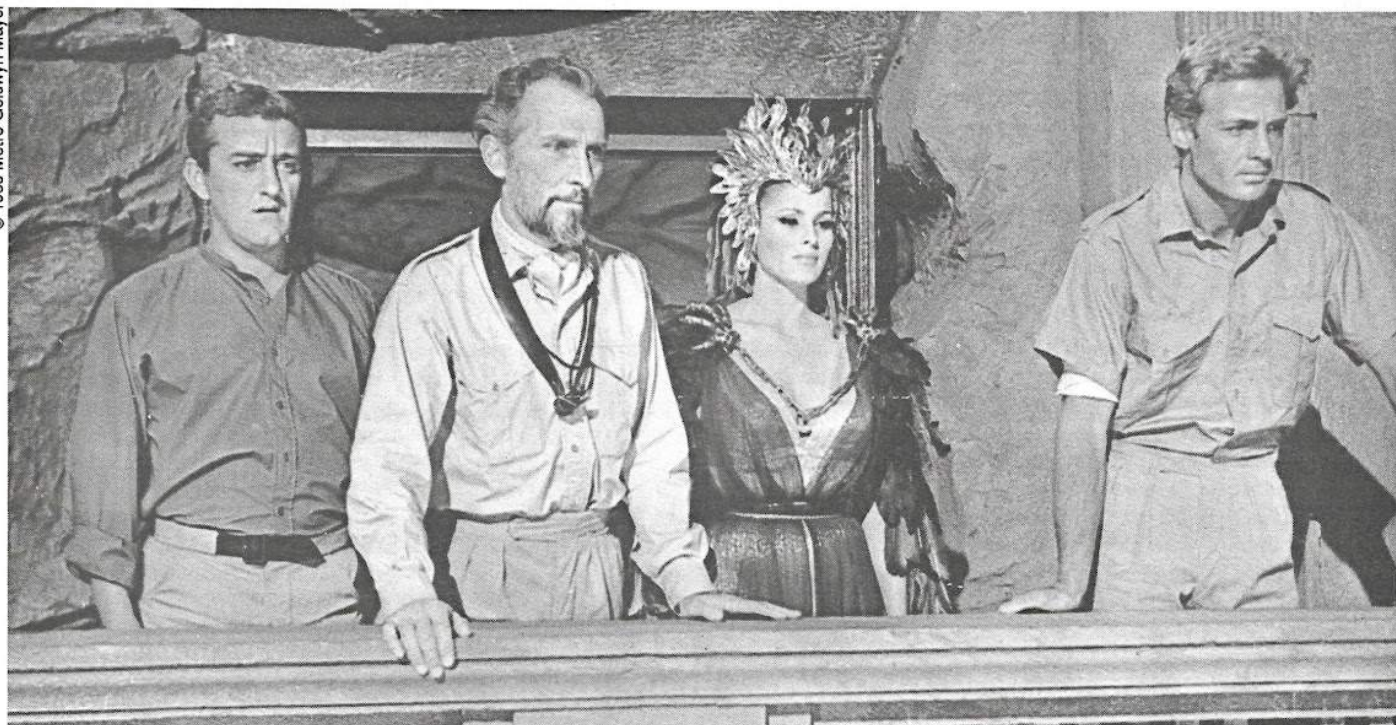
**RV:** *I did want to get to your most recent appearance as Sherlock Holmes, in THE MASKS OF DEATH. . .*

**PC:** Ah, yes! Kevin Francis, the son of Freddie Francis, the wonderful lighting/cameraman, who's forever winning Oscars in your country, isn't he?

**RV:** *Yes.*

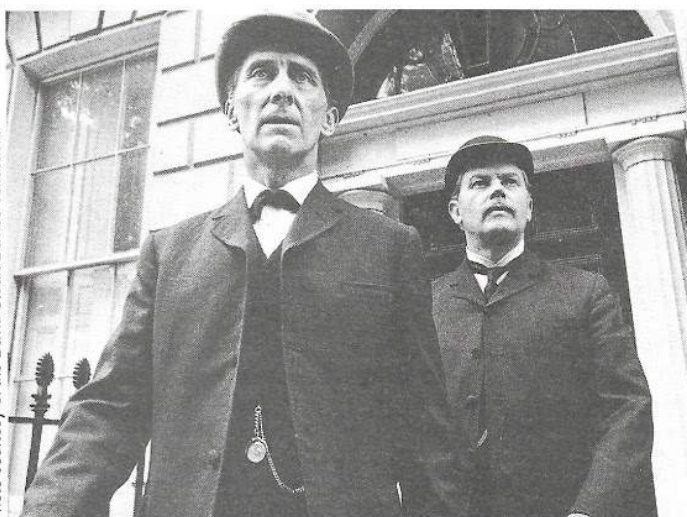
**PC:** His son Kevin has his own production company, as I'm sure you know, called Tyburn Productions at Pinewood, for whom I've made quite a number of pictures. He made THE MASKS OF DEATH. It had dear John Mills as Dr. Watson, and that dear lady who's left us . . .

**RV:** *Anne Baxter.*



*H. Rider Haggard's oft-filmed SHE came to the screen under the Hammer banner in 1965. Pictured: Bernard Cribbins as Job, Peter Cushing as Horace Holly, Ursula Andress as Ayesha (She Who Must Be Obeyed), and John Richardson as Leo Vincey.*





Following in the paw prints of Hammer's *THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES* (1959), Peter Cushing played Sherlock Holmes for the BBC in the 60s (opposite Nigel Stock as Watson) and again in 1984 for *THE MASKS OF DEATH* (opposite John Mills as Watson).

**PC:** Anne Baxter. Bless her. Mind you, the dear darling was a workaholic, wasn't she? She worked and worked. That's all she wanted to do. And dear, dear Ray Milland.

**RV:** And Anton Diffring. . .

**PC:** And dear Gordon Jackson. Oh, it was a lovely picture to make; it really was. There was another one we were going to do called *THE ABBOT'S CRY*, but for some logistic reason it wasn't made. I've never known why it wasn't made. I only know that I learned the part twice. (Laughs) Naturally, Kevin Francis still has the rights to it, but I'm far too old for the part, now. But I reckon he'll do it some day, possibly with Jeremy Brett and Edward Hardwicke. It's awfully good; a very, very good script. I think people would be surprised; they'd think it was an old Conan Doyle that's been dug out of the corner.

**RV:** It's a pity it wasn't made.

**PC:** It is a pity, particularly as I'd learned it twice. Actually, at this very moment, I have a beard, would you believe, because Kevin Francis. . .

**RV:** He has a film planned for you called *HERITAGE OF HORROR*.

**PC:** I'm very old, now, you know, and I have certain things wrong with me. I know I couldn't get insurance, which you have to for any film you make, but dear old Kevin has decided to scrub that. He said, "I'll use you." It's a lovely film; it's a great tribute to me, because it's about an old actor who wants to play King Lear, and no one will back him because he is no longer a commercial proposition. So he sets about showing them that he is. Also, he's been accused of being a Satanist! Which absolutely annoys him to such an extent that he almost goes berserk! Very cleverly, throughout the script, it flashes back to me as a much younger man, using scenes from all the films I've made over the years. I'm not al-

lowed to say who's in it yet, because Kevin wants to be absolutely sure that they sign their contracts. But, already in the old film footage we have people like Bela Lugosi, John Carradine, Boris Karloff, Christopher Lee, Vincent Price. . . shall I go on?

**RV:** That's impressive enough!

**PC:** I mean, it's a wonderful cast. I do hope that comes off.

**RV:** Is it true you recorded a rap song?

**PC:** Ah! Well, do you have another half hour, old darling? (Laughs) Oh, dear! Oh, lordy, lordy! A year ago, I was sent a poem, an anti-war poem, written by a young chap who had been entertaining the troops during the Gulf and the Falklands Wars. He had been so distressed by what he'd seen that he wrote this to get it off his chest. It's not a great poem, by any means, but it's very sincere and from the heart. And I was asked by a quite small recording company, up in the north of England, if I would perform it. Behind it, they could put what they like—for the English market, they would put a choir singing "Auld Lang Syne," and for the American market they would put the "Battle Hymn of the Republic," which they did. Then, about three months later, a larger company heard it, and said, "Can we get on the bandwagon and make a rap of this?" And I laughed and said, "Well, what do you mean? Do you wrap it up and send it away for presents?" "Oh, no, no, no, no, no! Where have you been all your life? Look at a program on television called *TOP OF THE POPS*." Which I dutifully did. And to my joy, up came one of my very favorite singers, Dame Kiri Te Kanawa, singing "The World in Union." And I thought, "Well, if this be that, play on and give me excess of it!" Don't mind while I quote Shakespeare. (Laughs) Then, when she'd finished, on it came! Rap! I must say I was a bit shattered, shall I say? But I gradually got used to the idea,

and I thought, "Well, I can quite see what the kids like about this." It's the tribal thing, isn't it? The sort of thing to which they dance, and that's why they've got figures as though they were ectomorphs, haven't they? (Laughs) They're all slim as my finger!

**RV:** So they released a recording of the poem with a rap track behind it?

**PC:** There was an enormous amount of publicity, and I went all over the shops promoting it, but it didn't take off. And really, I think I can see why. I'm not Michael Jackson, and anti-war poems don't seem to me to go with the frivolity of rap. Nothing against it; I think it's marvelous if you like that sort of thing. I think there still might be a "classical" version with, say, a violin behind it or something. As one of your presidents said, "We'll have to wait and see." Was it one of yours, or one of ours?

**RV:** I don't know! You've got me again.

**PC:** Something you don't know? Get your encyclopedia this minute! (Laughs)

**RV:** Well! You caught me out twice.

**PC:** Good! Well, we've been talking for about five hours.

**RV:** It's been wonderful.

**PC:** Well, I hope you've got what you want, dear boy. What's the time now, about six?

**RV:** Yes. The dawn is breaking.

**PC:** Oh! Is the dawn nice?

**RV:** Yes, lovely. I feel like Christopher Lee; it's getting daylight out, and I'd best get back. . .

**PC:** To your coffin, yes, yes, yes! (Laughs) Well, it's been very, very nice to speak to you, dear boy. Bless your heart. Give your kindest regards to your dear countrymen. They were all so very kind to me when I was over there.

**RV:** Okay. Thank you very much.

**PC:** Not at all. God bless you, dear boy.

**RV:** And you. Good bye.

**PC:** Good bye.



# Veronica Has Risen from the Grave

## An Interview with Veronica Carlson

by Bruce G. Hallenbeck



Most of us first saw blonde, statuesque Veronica Carlson in 1969, when Hammer's *DRACULA HAS RISEN FROM THE GRAVE* was released Stateside. Incredibly, it was rated G at the time, despite the fact that it was gorier and sexier than the R-rated *DRACULA* starring Frank Langella that was released 10 years later. But then, Veronica had a purity and an innocence that other Hammer heroines often lacked.

Born in the ancient northern English town of York, Veronica Carlson originally wanted to be an artist and indeed studied art for four years in London. While there, she answered an ad in a London newspaper for a bit part in the Morecambe and Wise feature film *THE MAGNIFICENT TWO* (1967) and suddenly found herself in demand. The following year she appeared in *THE BEST HOUSE IN LONDON* opposite David Hemmings.

A photo of Veronica clad in a bikini, which was published in a London tabloid, brought her to the attention of Sir James Carreras, then head of Hammer Films. It was he who cast her in the starring role of Maria in *DRACULA HAS RISEN FROM THE GRAVE* (1968), and roles followed quickly in *FRANKENSTEIN MUST BE DESTROYED* (1969), *THE HORROR OF FRANKENSTEIN* (1970), *OLD DRACULA* (1974), and *THE GHOUL* (1974).

Shortly after completing *THE GHOUL* for Kevin Francis' Tyburn Films, Veronica dropped out of the business to raise a family. She's been living quietly on an island off the South Carolina coast with her husband and three children for the past several years, and is now getting back into the business with her appearance as host and narrator of a compilation film called *VAMPIRES: FILMS WITH FANGS*.





**ABOVE:** Enticed by the wicked Zena (Barbara Ewing) into the cellars below the bakery in which her boyfriend works, innocent Maria (Veronica Carlson) meets the Lord of the Undead, Count Dracula (Christopher Lee), in 1968's *DRACULA HAS RISEN FROM THE GRAVE*. Where's a good hot cross bun when you need one? **PREVIOUS PAGE:** Veronica Carlson escaped the clutches of Dracula, only to be raped and stabbed to death by Baron Frankenstein (Peter Cushing) in 1969's *FRANKENSTEIN MUST BE DESTROYED*.

**Scarlet Street:** What can you tell us about this new film project?

**Veronica Carlson:** It's called *VAMPIRES: FILMS WITH FANGS*. It's written by a gentleman called Bruce "Gore" Hallenbeck. The producer is Carl Dietz and the director of photography is Antonio Panetta. They all did a film called *VAMPYRE* a couple of years ago. This project was filmed on many of the same locations, a marvelous step back in time called Eastfield Village in upstate New York. It's a completely restored 19th-century village owned by a gentleman named Donald Carpentier [art director for such Merchant-Ivory films as 1984's *THE BOSTONIANS*—Ed.]

**SS:** What's the concept of this production?

**VC:** Well, it's an affectionate look at the whole history of vampire films. It explores the effect these mythical creatures have on us. Sorry, did I say mythical? I think I just gave you a preview.

**SS:** Let's take our own trip into the past. How did you get your first part at Hammer?

**VC:** Jimmy Carreras spotted me in a photo layout. I had done a shoot on a beach, and Jimmy saw it in a newspaper. He contacted my agent and asked me to come down and test for the role in the *Dracula*

film. I never thought I'd get the part. I was convinced after the audition that I would never hear from them again. I remember not being able to eat an omelette that day because I was so upset. But then I got the call that I had the role! I was astounded! It was doubly exciting because I had always been a fan of those films. My friends and I used to skip school to see them.

**SS:** One of our favorites of your films is *HORROR OF FRANKENSTEIN*. How was Jimmy Sangster as a director?

**VC:** He was delightful. I have a photo of him in bed with me on the set. I was waiting for a lighting set-up to be completed, and I thought rather than have my stand-in lie in the bed, I'd get in myself. And Jimmy just climbed in with me!

**SS:** He has a great sense of humor.

**VC:** A wonderfully wicked sense of humor.

**SS:** Did you find a director who also happened to be the scriptwriter, as Sangster was on *HORROR*, less inclined to make on-set changes in a script?

**VC:** That's an interesting question. The answer is no. But then I don't recall any other directors making on-set changes in a script, either.

**SS:** The pace of shooting a Hammer Film probably precluded much improvisation.

**VC:** Exactly. We just didn't have the time! If everything had been thought out properly in advance—and it nearly always was—there was no need to deviate from the script. We would always have fun during rehearsals, but when we started filming, everything was serious business.

**SS:** How was Ralph Bates, your *HORROR* co-star, to work with?

**VC:** Oh, he was wonderful. A charming man. He always saw the funny side of things. He was a fine actor who wasn't that well-known here, but in England he was very respected, especially on the stage. He shall be missed. [Bates died in 1991 from pancreatic cancer—Ed.]

**SS:** When you made *THE GHOUL* with Peter Cushing, his wife, Helen, had recently passed away. Was he different to work with because of this?

**VC:** He was very different. I had worked with him, of course, on *FRANKENSTEIN MUST BE DESTROYED* a few years before that, so the difference was dramatic. He had become withdrawn, remote. Not that he wasn't the same gentle, kindly person I had known. But after a scene was done, he would repair to his dressing room. He had become very sad, a shadow of his former self in some ways. He had



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## ***“Peter Cushing is a gentle, kindly man. Christopher Lee was a majestic Dracula, but he was harder to get to know.”***

insisted on using a real photo of his wife in the film. There was a scene in which he had to cry, and when the cameras were turned off, he was still crying. It wasn't just acting; it was real. But he was always a sweet, kindly gentleman toward me and everyone else.

**SS:** *How did working at Tyburn differ from working at Hammer?*

**VC:** Hmm. Another interesting question. At first glance, it didn't seem to be different at all. I was delighted to be working at my favorite studio—Pinewood—again, with Freddie Francis directing me, but I would have to say that the sense of family wasn't there. You always had the feeling at Hammer that it was just one big happy family. You didn't have that feeling with Tyburn.

**SS:** *Speaking of Freddie Francis, of the directors you've had for your horror films, which do you prefer?*

**VC:** Well, I liked Freddie and Terry [Fisher] in different ways. I would have to say that Freddie was my favorite, because he was so patient and supportive. He used to literally take me by the hand and lead me through a scene. Of course, I was quite inexperienced on the Dracula film, so I needed that support. And Freddie also had a great sense of humor.

**SS:** *How did Francis' and Fisher's working methods differ?*

**VC:** Terry was a lovely gentleman, but he would never throw his arms around me and say, “How are you, Veronica?” or anything like that. Freddie always did. Terry would tell you what was happening in the scene you were about to shoot and then he'd pretty much let you go at it. He'd always let you know when you did something he didn't like, but he was not as outgoing as Freddie.

**SS:** *The word most often used to describe Terence Fisher is “shy.”*

**VC:** Yes, I think that's it. I think that Terry was a bit shy—and a true gentleman.

**SS:** *Please contrast working with your two best-known leading men: Peter Cushing and Christopher Lee.*

**VC:** Peter Cushing, as I've said, is a gentle, kindly man. Very patient and very helpful. It was really fun to work with him, especially on FRANKENSTEIN. Christopher Lee was a majestic Dracula, but he was harder to get to know. He tended to be rather aloof and remote. He has an incredible presence, though.

**SS:** *Your actual love interests in FRANKENSTEIN MUST BE DESTROYED and DRACULA HAS RISEN FROM THE GRAVE were Simon Ward and Barry Andrews, respec-*

*tively. At least, they played your love interests. What were they like?*

**VC:** I really enjoyed working with Simon. He took his craft very seriously, and I think everybody knew that he was going places. I thought that we had a good chemistry in our scenes. Not that I didn't enjoy working with Barry, but he kept pretty much to himself, and I don't think we had any chemistry at all.

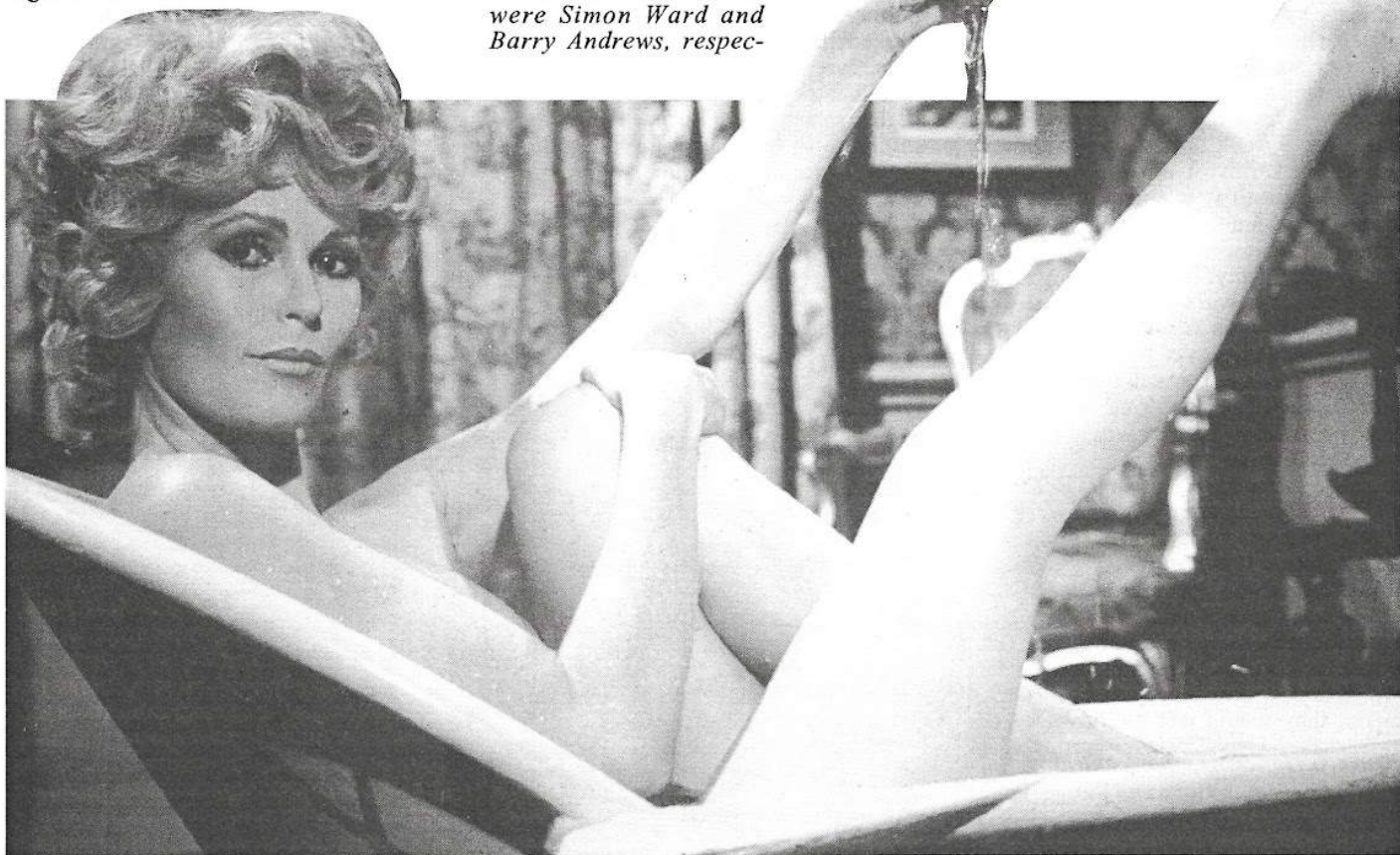
**SS:** *Really?*

**VC:** No, I just didn't see any chemistry in our scenes together. It could have been me. After all, I was young and inexperienced. But I just didn't think it worked.

**SS:** *Was the rape scene in FRANKENSTEIN MUST BE DESTROYED, which has recently been restored to American prints, in the original script?*

**VC:** No, it wasn't. I thought it was completely out of character for Baron Frankenstein. Terry, Peter, and I were all terribly upset about it.

**SS:** *Some critics described the rape as an attempt on Baron Frankenstein's part to break Anna's spirit—which, from the evidence, seems to be pretty well broken al-*







**Of her leading men in DRACULA HAS RISEN FROM THE GRAVE and FRANKENSTEIN MUST BE DESTROYED, Veronica Carlson preferred Simon Ward (BELOW RIGHT) in the Frankenstein film to Barry Andrews (ABOVE) in the Dracula.**

ready. Was that actually the motive given for the rape scene during filming?

VC: No, the motive was this: Jimmy Carreras came onto the set one day and said, "There isn't enough sex in this picture." He may have received orders from on high; I don't know. So that was how the rape scene came about. Terry argued at length to keep it out, but was overruled, so we had to shoot the scene. Peter and I hated doing it. When he had to rip my gown, he was very apologetic as we worked out the scene. It was eventually done in a series of close-ups. But I'll never forget this: when my gown was ripped on camera, Terry yelled, "Cut! I can't take anymore!" and turned his back and walked away. It was the only time I had seen him walk off the set. Roger Moore, who was filming THE SAINT next door, came over to comfort me. I was in tears. Roger was a friend of mine who was always very kind, and he had heard about how upset I was. I've never forgotten that, either.

SS: In FRANKENSTEIN MUST BE DESTROYED, a water main breaks, exposing a body buried in your yard. You have to hide the body before anyone sees it.

VC: Well, it was the coldest thing I had ever done, and there were firemen all around the set. They had to be there. The scene took three hours. Between takes I would dry off, so when it was time to shoot again, they would wet me down with a

watering can. Of course, it was ice-cold water. Then there was poor George Croft, buried. We were all so worried about him, that he'd asphyxiate.

SS: He must have been very heavy . . .

VC: There was a whole crew behind me when I pulled him out. They were really pulling him; he was on a backboard, but it looked like I pulled him. Anyway, the scene was finally over. I was so wet and cold that they thought I'd get pneumonia, so they sent me up to Roger Moore's dressing room to warm up. Unfortunately, he was on location at the time.

SS: What a pity!

VC: Wasn't it? But I stayed in that bath an hour just trying to thaw out.

SS: Which of your films is your favorite?

VC: You know, that's a difficult question. It's difficult to separate the film on which you had the most fun from the one that you think turned out the best. I would have to say that, from my standpoint as an actress, I found THE GHOUL to be the best. I thought that I had become much better at my craft by that time. But I think that I had the most fun making FRANKENSTEIN MUST BE DESTROYED, despite the agony of the rape scene, because it was so enjoyable working with Peter Cushing on that film.

SS: Malcolm Williamson, the composer for HORROR OF FRANKENSTEIN, has described you as "not my cup of tea." What was the problem, if any, between you and Williamson?

VC: Who?

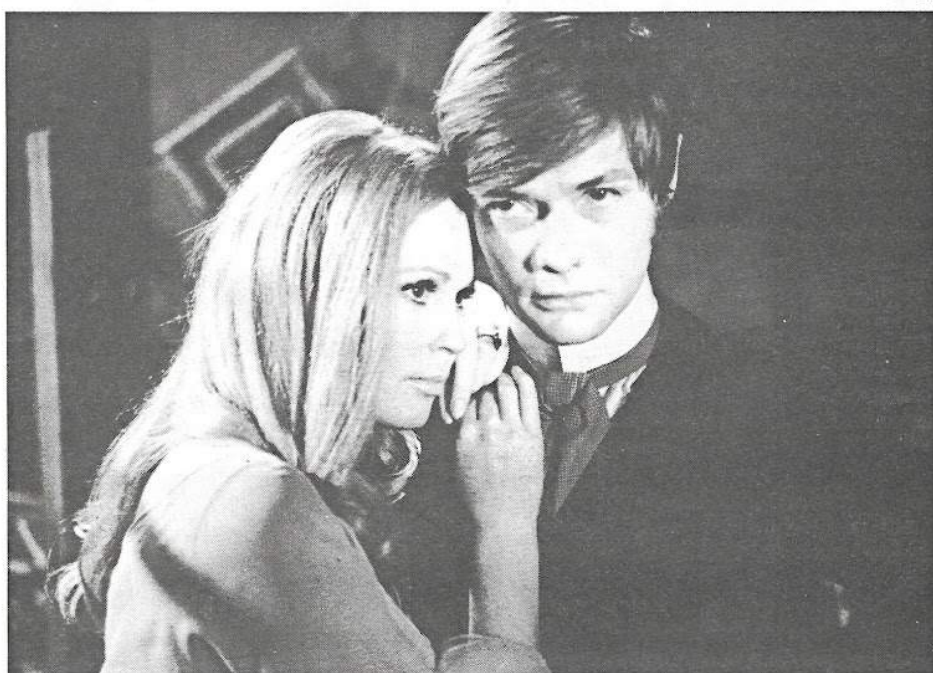
SS: Malcolm Williamson. He was quoted as saying some unkind things about you in Little Shoppe of Horrors and Bizarre magazines.

VC: I can't remember ever meeting him! Perhaps I did for a moment or two, but he certainly couldn't have made much of an impression. After all, after meeting all these other people—Freddie and Terry and Peter and Christopher—who gives a damn? (Laughs) I couldn't care less if I were his cup of tea! I don't want to be his cup of tea!

SS: He seems to have had an attitude problem. He also complained that David Peel, the star of Hammer's BRIDES OF DRACULA, was a flamboyant homosexual who used to bring his poodles onto the set.

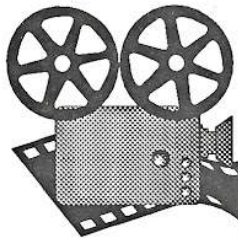
VC: Malcolm Williamson. You can quote me on this: Who?

I

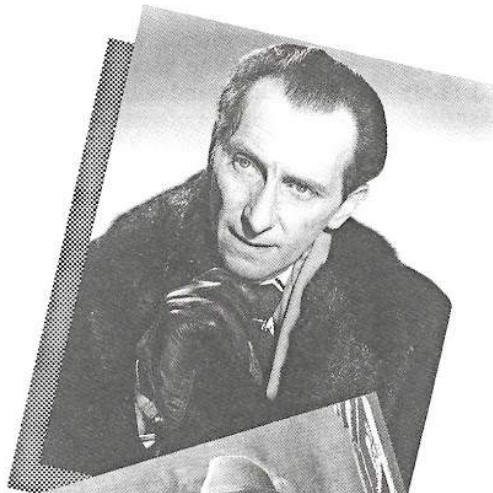


**Bruce G. Hallenbeck has contributed articles to Cinefantastique and Fangoria. He has also written, directed, and co-produced FANGS, now available on video.**





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# Frankenstein Must Be Destroyed

*Who are you? I'll do no more until  
you tell me who you are. . .*

—Dr. Karl Holst

**I**t's a rare fright flick that provides more than the usual quota of thrills and chills for discriminating fans. For every *BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN* (1935), with its Christlike creature suffering the slings and arrows of religious symbolism, there's a *MAD MONSTER* (1942), whose subtext is as solid as the cardboard walls enclosing its equally flaccid protagonists. Not that a *MAD MONSTER* can't be fun sometimes—it often is—but to glorify such PRC and Monogram monstrosities requires a sort of self-imposed shutdown of one's critical faculties, while to sing their praises strictly on the basis of nostalgia is to credit the film when time has done most of the work.

For a better understanding of what a truly well-crafted shocker can accomplish, consider the products of such artistically upscale studios as Universal, RKO, and Hammer. The best of Universal's Golden Age horrors—*FRANKENSTEIN* (1931), *THE BLACK CAT* (1934), and *SON OF FRANKENSTEIN* (1939), to name only three—have much more going for them than the occasional, viscerally-satisfying monster rumble. Embellished with well-timed shock effects, Val Lewton's string of RKO classics, produced in the 1940s and including *CAT PEOPLE* (1942), *I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE* (1943), and *THE SEVENTH VICTIM* (1943), are composed almost entirely of subtextual terrors. The best of them are not only fine, atmospheric horror films, but small masterpieces of suspense. As with Universal and RKO, Hammer Films at their best—in *BRIDES OF DRACULA* (1960), *THE CURSE OF THE WEREWOLF* (1961), and *FRANKENSTEIN MUST BE DESTROYED* (1970), for example—offer rich narrative delicacies to spice up their fear-filled plots. The movie-going equivalent of a fast-food freak is seldom sated by a Hammer repast, but those whose taste in celluloid is more discerning, those inclined to savor a good meal at their leisure—they will nearly always be satisfied.

Few studios were better than Hammer at conceiving character and story subtleties to enrich their on-screen stakings, beheadings, and brain transplants, and few films are better than Hammer's *FRANKENSTEIN MUST BE DESTROYED* at revealing the gulf between the manners of a repressive society

and the realities lurking beneath its surface courtesies. At first glance, the plot appears to be typical horror fare: Baron Frankenstein and the young couple who are his latest slaveys steal a body or two, transfer a brain from one body to another, care for the resultant "monster" until such time as it can hit the road to mayhem, and come to a crispy end in the inevitable burning building. But there is more—much more—than meets the eye.

Taken at face value, young lovers Anna Spengler and Dr. Karl Holst (Veronica Carlson and Simon Ward) are models of propriety, polite and fairly passionless members of a class that places, if not moral principles, at least the appearance of moral principles, above all else. Get under their skins, though, and upright Karl is exposed as a thief and a drug dealer, with Anna his passive partner in crime, if not sex. Their motives may be laudatory—they need the loot to pay Mrs. Spengler's medical expenses—but even in this there is a gentle hint of ethical duality, the money serving to keep Anna's mother safely tucked away in a far-off hospital, where her "nerve disorder" can't unnerve the populace.

With the single exception of a certain Mr. Fenner, the people around Anna and Karl—mainly, her boarders and his medical superiors—are blind to the pair's illicit activities. This has nothing to do with Anna and Karl's criminal cunning, which is nil, and everything to do with the fact that their acquaintances, representative of a society practically willing itself to ignorance, have no desire to delve below the surface. The latter half of *FRANKENSTEIN MUST BE DESTROYED*, which shifts the narrative focus from Anna and Karl (and Mr. Fenner) to the shared plight of Doctors Brandt and Richter (played by George Pravda and Freddie Jones, respectively), is almost entirely given over to this theme. Indeed, it is dramatized so forcefully that what previously was subtext becomes preeminent: Brandt finds that his brain, his entire inner self, has been transferred into the body of Richter and that his wife, Ella (Maxine Audley), is neither eager nor able to see the real man beneath the outer shell. Granted that the concept of her husband's brain taking up residence in another man's skull may be a little *outré*, Ella makes no real effort to understand. Nor should the operation have been entirely alien to her: Dr. Brandt

was involved in precisely that form of experimentation, in written collaboration with none other than Baron Victor Frankenstein.

Or, as we currently know him, Mr. Fenner.

Peter Cushing starred a half-dozen times as the Baron, beginning with 1957's *THE CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN* and concluding with *FRANKENSTEIN AND THE MONSTER FROM HELL* in 1974. Taken as a whole, the series makes hash of the unwritten law of diminishing returns. It is the second and fifth "episodes" that stand out, and Cushing takes full advantage of each film's moral ambiguities to create a character sharply defined and rich in nuance. In *FRANKENSTEIN MUST BE DESTROYED*, especially, the actor pushes every facet of the Baron's complex personality to its limit. He is by turns idealistic, cynical, warmly enthusiastic, coldly detached, honest, deceitful, and mordantly witty. He displays a lust absent from the Baron's persona since *THE CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN*, and gives vent to that lust with disastrous results. Still, for all his faults, real or perceived, Baron Frankenstein is the only character in the film inclined, figuratively as well as literally, to explore what lies below the surface of his fellow man. False identity apart, and notwithstanding the fact that he makes his first, murderous appearance wearing a bizarre rubber mask (the better to set up the thematic concerns of the story that follows), the Baron is the most self-revealing of men, an outlaw of society abiding by society's rules only when they serve his own purpose—yet working tirelessly, if not selflessly, to benefit through science those who would bring him ruin. (The Baron's crackpot plan in *FRANKENSTEIN MUST BE DESTROYED* is to preserve the great brains of civilization by popping them into new bodies when their old "containers" wear out.)

The film harkens back to *THE CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN* in that the Baron is without a willing disciple to help him carry out his experiments. Forcing the hapless lovers, through blackmail, to act as his assistants, Frankenstein treats Karl with bemused condescension and Anna with contempt. For much of the story, Anna is good for little more than making coffee—then, casually, almost as an afterthought, the Baron rapes her. ("The struggle continues with appropriate cries and noises. Frankenstein eventu-



ally succeeding—as far as the censor will allow—having torn Anna's night-dress off her shoulders at least.") In fact, the rape was an afterthought. This notorious scene was not part of the original screenplay (it is an undated "new scene" in the December 9, 1968, script by Bert Batt and Anthony Nelson-Keys, quoted in part above). Veronica Carlson, elsewhere and in this issue's *Scarlet Street* interview, remembers that the decision to film it was fought, not just by her, but by director Terence Fisher and Peter Cushing; still, it was included at the behest of studio head Sir James Carreras, who felt that the production didn't have enough sex. (If the intention had been that FRANKENSTEIN MUST BE DESTROYED have sex, Carreras was certainly correct.)

Though it was reportedly a difficult and traumatic scene to enact, it works perfectly well on a thematic level: Anna now has a secret that she keeps even from Karl, a secret that either he never suspects or chooses "politely" to

ignore. Nor does its inclusion mar Carlson's performance, an opinion not held by the actress herself: "My reactions to Peter Cushing are false after the scene was inserted," she recalled in Deborah Del Vecchio and Tom Johnson's *Peter Cushing: The Gentle Man of Horror and His 91 Films* (McFarland, 1992). "It gives my character no credence and makes me, as an actress, look the fool."

Actually, Anna is so shell-shocked in her later scenes that she acts exactly as one might act after being brutalized. (It may not have been Carlson's intention to get that effect, but, just as the emotional weight of a single reaction shot of James Stewart in 1954's REAR WINDOW is derived from the information given in the shot to which he reacts, so Anna's state of being is colored by the knowledge, given to the audience if not the actress, that she has been violated—at least in the area of her shoulders.) The rape scene pays another, unexpected dividend. Very late in

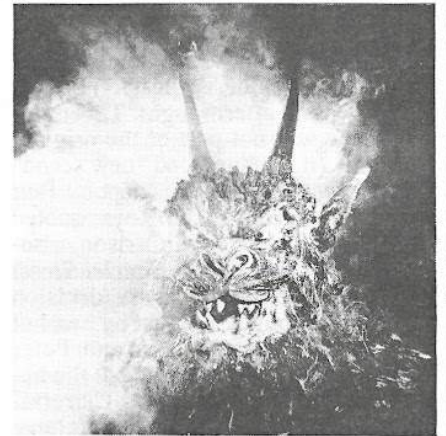
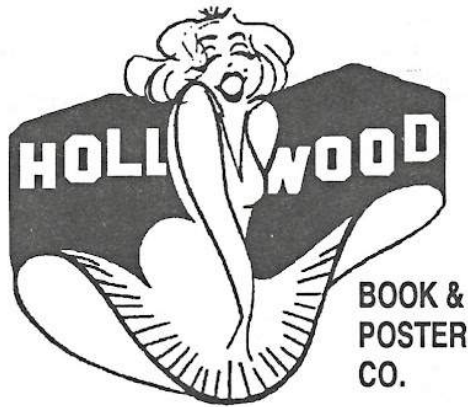
the proceedings, when Anna comes abruptly upon Brandt/Richter, a possible reason for her severe reaction to Frankenstein's gentle, soft-spoken "creation"—namely, that she fears she will again suffer rape, this time at the hands of the Baron's proxy—springs to mind. It follows naturally that Anna will stab the poor man and, in turn, be penetrated (this time with a knife) by Frankenstein. (The manner in which he stabs Anna—holding the knife's handle against his waist and pulling her to him—makes the sexual nature of the crime readily apparent. The rape itself makes clear Frankenstein's complicity in Anna's violent behavior, and his own moral responsibility—for all his series-long cries of "interfering peasants"—for the failure of his life's work.)

FRANKENSTEIN MUST BE DESTROYED contains another, less infamous scene that stands apart from the rest of Hammer's Gothic output. Karl and the Baron have buried Brandt's brainless remains in Anna's garden.



Stars Peter Cushing and Veronica Carlson didn't want to film it and director Terence Fisher didn't want to film it, but the powers that be wanted it filmed. The notorious rape scene from FRANKENSTEIN MUST BE DESTROYED (1970).





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*Anna Spengler and Karl Holst (Veronica Carlson and Simon Ward), unwilling accomplices to the ruthless Baron, know they have but one means of escape: FRANKENSTEIN MUST BE DESTROYED.*

The following day, a neighbor, offering to shop for the younger woman, looks in as Anna tends to the yard. Suddenly, a water main bursts directly below the garden. The neighbor runs for help; Anna stands frozen in horror as slowly, obscenely, Brandt's lifeless hand erupts from the ground and "gestures" in the gushing water. Driven to desperate action, Anna plucks the sodden corpse from her garden and drags it behind a nearby shed mere seconds before the neighbor returns.

The sequence is memorable for several reasons, not the least being that it is superbly acted by Carlson and directed by Fisher. (It is, perhaps, Veronica Carlson's finest moment on screen, and a strong riposte to those who question Terence Fisher's unquestionable skills.) It is also unique in that it is a sequence seemingly designed strictly as a set piece; it's as though a Hitchcockian tangent had somehow attached itself to Fisher's straightforward, linear narrative. Only when the scene is considered for its thematic significance—as one of the most vivid illustrations in *FRANKENSTEIN MUST BE DESTROYED* of a secret, chaotic reality at work beneath a deceptively tranquil surface—does the reason for its inclusion become obvious.

*Continued on page 100*





Peter Cushing and part of Ingrid Pitt in Hammer's *THE VAMPIRE LOVERS* (1971), the first film in the Karnstein trilogy.

*A whisper of warm desire becomes a shriek of chilling terror in the embrace of the blood-nymphs.*

—from an advertising teaser for  
**THE VAMPIRE LOVERS**

It's hard to imagine what J. Sheridan Le Fanu (1814–1873) would have thought had he known what would spring forth from his brief novella *Carmilla*, written well over 100 years ago. His fantastic and sensuous tale of lesbian-tinged vampirism is considered not only a cornerstone of supernatural literature, but also one of its most finely-wrought stories. *Carmilla* was penned some 25 years earlier than fellow-Dubliner Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), and the immortal Count's creator openly acknowledged the influence of Le Fanu's weird yarn on his own. Over 50 years later, filmmakers began to take advantage of the many ghastly and suggestive elements inherent in the tale to produce films that sometimes exploited and occasionally conveyed what Le Fanu had in mind.

The horrific and erotic events of *Carmilla* unfold around the consuming and destructive relationship between the evil Mircalla (a vampire in sheep's clothing known also as Carmilla and Millarca) and an innocent young lady who is destined to become one more entrée on the creature's

bloody menu. It is specifically this theme of Sapphic sexual initiation that has been carried over into the story's many celluloid translations. Notable films not directly based on *Carmilla* but highlighting lesbianism include *DRACULA'S DAUGHTER* (1936), featuring Gloria Holden as a countess whose languid gaze suggests more than mere want of "tea and sympathy" from her female paramours, and two very stylish and much more explicit jaunts: Harry Kümel's *DAUGHTERS OF DARKNESS* (1971), and Tony Scott's *THE HUNGER* (1983).

There have been several attempts to bring *Carmilla* to the screen. Although Roger Vadim's *BLOOD AND ROSES* (1961) and Vincente Aranda's *THE BLOOD-SPATTERED BRIDE* (1972) claim to be "inspired" by Le Fanu's tale, they are hardly inspired filmmaking and, in both cases, bear only passing resemblance to their supposed source material. It took the House of Hammer to not only remain surprisingly faithful to Le Fanu's text, but also create an often-entertaining trilogy of films centering around the vampiress and her demonic family, the Karnsteins: *THE VAMPIRE LOVERS* (1970), *LUST FOR A VAMPIRE* (1970), and *TWINS OF EVIL* (1971). Peter Cushing turns up in the first and final installment, playing a different role in each. Even though he appears only briefly in an early portion of *THE VAM-*

*PIRE LOVERS*, and briefly at the end to take care of business, Cushing helps make the film one of Hammer's most popular turns. It is certainly the best of the trilogy.

Among the many reasons for Peter Cushing's success in the horror field is the fact that his presence guarantees a performance marked by the obvious care and sincerity that are his hallmarks. By the time Cushing portrayed General Spielsdorf in *THE VAMPIRE LOVERS*, he had been battling assorted vampires, mutinous creations, and gorgons for many years. Thus, genre fans respond with deep affection at the film's finale, when he leads the team whose purpose it is to destroy Mircalla (Ingrid Pitt). When no one in the group has the courage to properly despatch the wicked creature, Cushing briskly steps in, solemnly stating, "I will do it. There's no other way." He not only stakes Miss Pitt, but decapitates her for good measure!

Peter Cushing is a man of unshakable religious fortitude. He views his cinematic role of vampire-slayer *extraordinaire* as a champion of Good in the eternal struggle with the darker elements of this world . . . and the next. Luckily for his many fans, the battle has been long-lasting—as will be the unforgettable work of the very singular Mr. Cushing.

—Michael Orlando Yaccarino

## THE VAMPIRE LOVERS



# THE ABOMINABLE SNOWMAN OF THE HIMALAYAS

The genius of Peter Cushing lies in his ability to take basically recessive, academic roles and turn them into vigorous, richly-nuanced characters that command audience attention without resorting to hamminess or the usual actors' tricks. If acting is the art of concealment, Cushing is one of the genuine artists associated with the horror genre. His amazing facility to get inside a character is in full view in *THE ABOMINABLE SNOWMAN* (1957), in which he attacks the role of a botanist in search of the elusive Yeti with flawless precision and total conviction.

Released between Hammer's mega-hits *THE CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN* (1957) and *HORROR OF DRACULA* (1958), this overlooked gem is as much a morality tale as a science-fiction adventure, which probable explains why it sold fewer tickets than most of the exploitation shockers of the day. It was the final collaboration of director Val Guest and writer Nigel Kneale, the team responsible for Hammer's under-appreciated Quatermass series, and the last of the studio's black-and-white science-fiction films before the decision was made to concentrate on Technicolor Gothic horrors.

The Yeti, the Himalayas' most famous denizen, was ill-served by the movies, having prowled through some of the crudest of Hollywood potboilers. The god-awful *THE SNOW CREATURE* (1954) was rapidly followed by the merely awful *MAN BEAST* (1955); neither deserves to be mentioned in the same breath as *THE ABOMINABLE SNOWMAN*. Though he re-hashed the more-or-less standard plot of a scientific expedition on the trail of the legendary beast, Kneale,

who based his script on his own TV play, grounded his story in conflict and a rich layer of characterization.

British botanist John Rollason (Cushing) labors in the mountains cataloging specimens of vegetation for an unnamed scientific foundation. Naively, he joins a Yeti hunt headed by a gruff but affable American, Tom Friend (Forrest Tucker), only to find his companions slightly more abominable than the so-called "Snowman" they're tracking. "Get this straight, Doc, I'm no sterling character," confesses the ironically-named Friend, who turns out to be the most ruthless of profiteers. (The Americans in the film are pointedly depicted as exploiters; the British members of the team have the purest of motives. Could Kneale be saying something about us?) As the party closes in on its prey, Rollason realizes that the Yeti are benign, super-intelligent beings; the "bring 'em back alive" mentality of his companions becomes their undoing. By the final reel, only the mild-mannered scientist survives.

*THE ABOMINABLE SNOWMAN* offers fewer physical thrills than the average outdoor adventure, but Guest sets a high-strung pace through the rapid-fire dialogue delivery of his cast. This edgy, naturalistic style served the director well in his previous science-fiction assignments; Kneale's well-written, confrontation-fraught exchanges are pleasurable and involving. (The collaboration between the director and writer, interestingly, was not an active one. Guest has confessed that he met Kneale only a couple of times and barely remembers what the writer looks like.)

Although Cushing handily steals the film, top-billed Forrest Tucker holds up

his end admirably. The burly, rough-hewn star of dozens of Hollywood Westerns and action films never dazzled the critics with his acting prowess—his range was maybe half that of John Wayne—but he is particularly well-suited to his role. He and Cushing, both highly professional players, make the most unlikely of screen teams, and it's great fun watching them clash. The presence of Rollason's nagging, overprotective wife (played by Maureen Connell) remains the film's only serious miscalculation. Despite budget limitations, Guest does an excellent job of matching his second-unit footage with the often-obvious studio shots. Humphrey Searle's evocative score, which is embellished with a full complement of Tibetan gongs, bells, and drums, and recalls Dimitri Tiomkin's classic score for *LOST HORIZON* (1937), chimes with an austere beauty.

—Michael Brunas



Peter Cushing and Forrest Tucker bury their frozen dead in 1957's *THE ABOMINABLE SNOWMAN*.

## A CHUMP AT OXFORD

Tom Mix had been Peter Cushing's boyhood idol and, in the late 1930s, the young actor decided to visit the country in which his hero had roamed the prairie. Cushing's father paid for the one-way ticket from his native England to the United States. In America, the young actor made his way to Hollywood and the office of producer Edward Small. By claiming (quite falsely) that he could handle a sword with ease, Cushing landed a small role in the 1939 production of *THE MAN IN THE IRON MASK*, starring sometimes-Saint Louis Hayward. Director James Whale was so pleased with the

actor's work that he gave him a second small role in the same movie. (The future Baron Frankenstein shows up on a horse, imparting one line of dialogue: "The King wants to see you!") Bitten by the movie bug, Cushing sought further film work.

His next role was another small part, this time opposite comedy kings Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy in *A CHUMP AT OXFORD* (1940). He is noticeable, if not precisely prominent, as one of a group of students who take action as the result of a classmate's expulsion—the result, in turn, of a run-in with Stan and Ollie—and attempt to "de-pants" our heroes. ("We're

going to tear off your britches and run you out of Oxford!") Cushing is on hand as the students plot revenge and march to Stan and Ollie's rooms, chanting "Fe, fi, fo, fum, I smell the blood of an American! Be he alive or be he dead, we'll grind his bones to make our bread." (Little did the newcomer know that a very large portion of his career would be spent grinding bones, for science if not for sustenance.)

Following *A CHUMP AT OXFORD* (whose title was derived from *A YANK AT OXFORD*, made in 1938 with Robert Taylor in the lead), Cushing played Carole Lombard's intended in 1940's *VIGIL IN THE NIGHT*, directed by George Stevens. It was a much bigger part than any he had previously committed to film. Before leaving Hollywood to



return home, Cushing made two more movies: 1940's *WOMEN IN WAR* and 1941's *THEY DARE NOT LOVE*, the latter directed by Whale. Seven years later, in England, Peter Cushing had his next film role. He played Osric in Laurence Olivier's Oscar-winning *HAMLET*.

—Jim Knüsch

## The Hound of the Baskervilles

Hammer Films' 1959 production of *THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES* is both my favorite Sherlock Holmes film and my favorite Peter Cushing film, perhaps because it was my dramatic introduction to both these distinguished gentlemen. Having since seen numerous versions of the Conan Doyle story, Hammer's lively retelling remains at the top of the list, thanks to its marvelous atmosphere, evocative music score, and top-notch performance by Cushing, who gives us perhaps the definitive Sherlock Holmes.

Critic Daniel Cohen, in his attractive but ill-researched *Horror Movies* (Bison, 1984), has charged that Hammer contrived to mold *THE HOUND* into one of their "bloody horror shows." Although its lurid advertising campaign seems to bear this out ("Fangs dripping with the blood of its victims!"), all that Hammer can be charged with is emphasizing the supernatural/thriller aspects of the story while remaining basically faithful to the source.

The company's pair of Gothic hits, *THE CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN* (1957) and *HORROR OF DRACULA* (1958), had already been released to box-office success when producer Anthony Hinds brought together the same creative team for *THE HOUND*. Terence Fisher returned to direct Cushing and co-star Christopher Lee (who plays the comparatively subdued romantic lead, Sir Henry Baskerville, following his spectacular turns as Count Dracula and Frankenstein's Creature). Cinematographer Jack Asher once again captured Bernard Robinson's production designs in moody Technicolor, including a re-dress of Bray Studio's Castle Dracula as the facade of Baskerville Hall. Complementing the mysterious surroundings is the music of James Bernard, who provided one of his most memorable dramatic scores.

It's the assemblage of eerie images and thrilling moments that distinguishes Hammer's telling of Conan Doyle's best-known story. David Oxley's portrayal of the evil Sir Hugo Baskerville in the vivid sequence that opens the film establishes the lively tone to follow. Enraged over the

escape of the farm girl whom he has abducted, Hugo appears to his henchmen and growls, amid a clap of thunder, "The bitch has got away! The hounds . . . let loose the pack!" Hugo's attitude is adjusted, of course, when the unseen Hound pounces on him within the fog-enshrouded ruins of an ancient Dartmoor abbey.

Later, in the present (Victorian) day, Holmes and John H. Watson, M.D. (Andre Morell) are persuaded by the bearded and ominous Dr. Mortimer (Francis de Wolff) to protect Sir Henry, who, following the mysterious death of his uncle, is next in line to be hounded by the Baskerville curse. Holmes sends Watson ahead to accompany Mortimer and the young heir to the family homestead. There, a haunting sequence begins with manservant Barrymore (John Le Mesurier) telling of the legendary Hound: "All I know is that I've heard it," he intones, "heard its terrible howl on the night before Sir Charles died." Following this is a creepy scene in which Watson, awakened by a sobbing in the corridors, sees two lights: the first under the door of an attic room, the second, accompanied by an unearthly howl, far out on the murky moor.

As the "dark, scowling girl of the moors" (that's what it says in the press release), Italian actress Marla Landi does a turn befitting one of Hammer's most blood-thirsty vampires. Enticing Sir Henry to a rendezvous at the abbey ruins, she lashes out like a cobra, revealing that it was she who lured Henry's uncle to his death at the paws of the Hound. "He died screaming," she hisses malevolently. "And now the curse of the Hound is on you!"

Best of all, of course, is Peter Cushing's performance as the Great Detective. *Newsweek* called Cushing "the best Sher-

lock Holmes yet . . . the epitome of the classical detective. He is a living, breathing Holmes." Cushing, whose sharp, energetic, even irritable portrayal prefigures Jeremy Brett's fine performances of decades later, took as a cue Holmes' cocaine addiction and developed a nervous, darting manner for the detective. One wouldn't want to be on the wrong side of this Mr. Holmes, as Dr. Mortimer finds out when he is confronted and nearly skewered by an ancient dagger thrown by the angry sleuth. It's amazing that Watson can keep up with Holmes as he dashes through moor and mire in his deerstalker and cloak. (Cushing, as is his meticulous habit, supervised his own costuming based on the classic illustrations by Sidney Paget.)

As author David Pirie points out in *A Heritage of Horror* (Avon, 1973), there is a parallel between Cushing's Holmes, here dealing with matters mystical, and his Van Helsing. "There is more evil around us here than I have ever encountered before," he tells Watson as they confer among the ancient ruins. Then, hearing the far-off snarls of a Hound attack, the pair races to the scene and discovers what appears to be Sir Henry's lifeless body. "I shall not rest until I've destroyed the thing that killed him," Holmes vows, sounding very like the vampire hunter Cushing would portray vividly in several Hammer productions.

*THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES* is a first-rate addition to the voluminous catalogue of Holmesian films. Hammer and *THE HOUND* proved to be a perfect match, a description that can, indeed, be applied to the felicitous pairing of Messrs. Cushing and Holmes.

—John J. Mathews



*Sherlock Holmes (Peter Cushing) points out the obvious to Dr. Watson (Andre Morell).*



# The Gorgon

*And they are three, the Gorgons, each with wings and snaky hair, most horrible to mortals whom no man shall behold and draw again the breath of life.*

—Edith Hamilton: Mythology

*I am agonized by pains in my chest. I am turning to stone.*

—Dr. Heitz in THE GORGON

By 1964, Hammer Films had successfully reincarnated the classic Universal monsters of yore for baby-boomer horror fans. Baron Frankenstein, Count Dracula, and the Mummy were well into (or about to enter) the sequel stage, and Hammer badly needed a fresh new fiend to bring to the screen. It was only fitting that stars Peter Cushing and Christopher Lee and director Terence Fisher (previously united for 1957's *THE CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN*, 1958's *HORROR OF DRACULA*, and 1959's *THE MUMMY*) should helm the new project. Although it did not create the sensation of its predecessors, Hammer's *THE GORGON* emerged as one of the studio's most haunting films and remained a Fisher favorite until his death.

Murders are occurring in the village of Vandorf. Bodies are found turned to stone, and the town magistrates, including Inspector Kanof (Patrick Troughton), are not saying much. The rocks really hit the fan when Paul Heitz (Richard Pasco), son of the late Professor Heitz (Michael Goodliffe)—who is a stiff in more ways than one—arrives on the scene and accuses Kanof and Dr. Namaroff (Peter Cushing) of a cover-up. Paul falls hard for Namaroff's assistant, Carla Hoffman (Barbara Shelley), not realizing that the soft-spoken woman is the human incarnation of Megera, one of the three Gorgon sisters of Greek mythology (the remaining sisters being—no, not Maxene and Laverne—Gesephene and Medusa). It takes Paul's mentor, Professor Meister (Christopher Lee), to successfully unravel the mystery and destroy the monster, but he does so at the cost of several lives, including the petrified Paul's. (Well, we said he fell hard.)



Photo courtesy of Dick Klemensen

*Terence Fisher instructs Peter Cushing in the proper handling of petrified people.*

*THE GORGON*, far from being the uneventful bore that some critics find it, is a moody, gripping film, the closest Hammer ever came to the adult fairy tale that Christopher Lee prefers to call his horror movies. Screenwriter John Gilling (who went on to direct two of Hammer's most critically lauded films in 1966: *THE REPTILE* and *THE PLAGUE OF THE ZOMBIES*) fills the screen with myths and legends galore. One of the best sequences finds Paul lured by siren song into a dark courtyard. Autumn leaves fall in atmospheric splendor as the young man sits at the edge of a fountain and stares at his reflection in the water. Suddenly, the image of Megera appears next to his and, screaming, Paul visibly ages. (This is reminiscent of the legend of Hermaphroditus, who encountered the reflection of the nymph Salmacis and became merged with her in the water.)

*THE GORGON* is extremely well-acted. Peter Cushing, surprisingly cast as Namaroff when a Van Helsing like professor was on hand, imbues the role with a hard-edged intensity, crossing Paul and

Meister at every turn as he contributes to the conspiracy of silence for his own selfish reasons. Richard Pasco and Barbara Shelley skillfully carry the main weight of the narrative as the doomed lovers. Christopher Lee, freed of the restraints of cape and fangs, has an actor's field day with the bullying, eccentric, ultimately kind-hearted character of Professor Meister.

The film's only flaw is the unfortunate makeup and effects for *THE GORGON*'s snake-riddled head. Fortunately, Fisher employs a number of "Now you see her, now you don't" quick cuts that hide the title creature's inadequate coiffure, and James Bernard's sinuous, melancholy score fills in the gaps when Megera isn't entirely on view. Although *THE GORGON* does not have an especially good reputation among horror buffs—particularly among those disinclined to favor Hammer Films in the first place—it's a worthwhile experience for anyone willing to give up a few minutes of mindless monster mayhem for a somber, well-played story.

—Bill Amazzini

## CASH ON DEMAND

During the period when Hammer Films was first producing its classic variations on Universal's monster movies of the

30s and 40s, the company was also turning out swashbucklers (1963's *THE SCARLET BLADE*), psycho films (1963's *PARANOIC*), and even an occasional sci-fi foray (1963's *THESE ARE THE DAMNED*). For the most part, these are entertaining and well-crafted pictures that are, perhaps inevitably, overlooked by Gothic horror fans. Another such film—and one of the best of Hammer's non-horror titles—is 1963's *CASH ON DEMAND*, a personal

favorite of Peter Cushing, who knows a good film not only when he sees one, but when he stars in one as well.

The plot (based on Jacques Gillies' play *THE GOLD INSIDE*) is actually a clever variation of Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, with Ebenezer Scrooge represented by the character of bank president Fordyce (played by Cushing), Bob Cratchit by senior clerk Pearson (Richard Vernon), and the ghostly cham-





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pions of compassion and good fellowship by, of all people, bank robber Hepburn (Andre Morell).

For 15 years, the anal-retentive Fordyce has ruled over his pecuniary kingdom with an iron glove. Early in the story, he chastises Pearson for neglecting to replace the nibs on the pens laid out for customer use. ("A general doesn't inspect every button of every soldier every day," scolds Fordyce, making it clear that his second-in-command has shirked his duty.) Later, the petty tyrant prepares to dismiss Pearson for a minor infraction of the rules—even though it's a mere two days before Christmas. He is frustrated in his resolve by the sudden intrusion of Colonel Gore Hepburn into the usual routine of the day. The newcomer introduces himself as a representative of the bank's insurance company, on the scene for a surprise inspection. Alone with Fordyce, though, the Colonel's true purpose is revealed when the self-styled "general" receives an urgent phone call from his wife: She is being held prisoner, and both she and their son will be killed unless Fordyce robs his own bank! The stunned bank president's humiliating ordeal, which results in the breaking of many of his own steadfast rules, and the incongruous humanity of Hepburn, who, greed notwithstanding, is cruel almost to be kind, serve to make a better

man of Fordyce. By film's end, he is preparing to join his staff for the office Christmas party that, earlier, he was quite ready to deny them.

The three leads are uniformly fine. Cushing inspires compassion for what is, initially, a very disagreeable character. (Not disagreeable in the comic tradition of Scrooge, mind you, but genuinely unappealing.) With great skill, the actor makes his audience root for a man who, moments before, they were eager to see get his comeuppance. Sympathy continually shifts from Fordyce to Hepburn—who, as played by the talented Morell, is astute, witty, and ruthless—and back again. Even before he forces Fordyce to play the robber's game, the Colonel puts the martinet firmly in his place simply by knowing much more about the bank's employees than the man in charge. (He even compels Fordyce to

contribute to the fund for the Christmas party!) In 1959, Morell was a memorable Watson to Cushing's Holmes in Hammer's THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES; here, as opponents unhampered by legendary Hell Hounds, and helped immeasurably by Vernon's restrained performance as Pearson, they are practically the whole show—and it's a very fine, suspense-filled show indeed.

—Kevin G. Shinnick



Peter Cushing and Andre Morell in CASH ON DEMAND



# R. Chatwynd-Hayes speaks . . . FROM BEYOND THE GRAVE

In 1974, following his success in *THE HOUSE THAT DRIPPED BLOOD* (1971), *ASYLUM* (1972), and *TALES FROM THE CRYPT* (1972), horror veteran Peter Cushing starred as the proprietor of an eerie antique shop in Kevin Connor's anthology film *FROM BEYOND THE GRAVE*.

The film revolves around Temptations Limited, an unearthly emporium of bizarre novelties whose prices are far higher than those written on their tags. We witness the terrible fates that overtake four patrons of the shop.

In the first tale, "The Gatecrasher," a homicidal spectre trapped within an antique gilt mirror drives its owner to commit multiple murders. Next, in "An Act of Kindness," a boy's fondest wish—namely, to be rid of his disagreeable parents—is granted with the aid of a mysterious beggar and his daughter, both of

whom are well-versed in the art of black magic. Story three, "The Elemental," follows the comical exorcism of a high-class gentleman with a demon on his shoulder. In the final tale, "The Door," a couple discovers that the title object is a portal to another world.

*FROM BEYOND THE GRAVE* (a.k.a. *THE CREATURES*) also stars David Warner, Donald Pleasence, Diana Dors, Margaret Leighton, Ian Carmichael, Ian Ogilvy, and Lesley-Anne Down.

Interestingly, the film bears a strong resemblance to the recent syndicated television show *FRIDAY THE 13TH: THE SERIES*, which involved a collection of cursed objects. However, all of the stories dramatized in *FROM BEYOND THE GRAVE* are based on the works of English author R. Chatwynd-Hayes.

Although Chatwynd-Hayes is virtually unknown in America, he has gained fame in Britain as one of the preeminent horror authors of the past three decades. He has written numerous tales of terror (*The Unbidden*, *Cold Terror*, *A Quiver of Ghosts*) as well as full-length novels (*The Grange*, *The Other Side*, *The Curse of the Snake God*) and has edited more than three dozen horror anthologies.

R. Chatwynd-Hayes' stories have been the basis for two horror movies: *FROM BEYOND THE GRAVE* and *THE*

*MONSTER CLUB* (1981), the latter an anthology film starring Vincent Price as a vampire and John Carradine as the author himself.

Here, in an exclusive chat from his home in Middlesex, England, the 73-year-old author discusses the adaptations of his work to the screen.

\*\*\*

**Scarlet Street:** What was your reaction when you learned that *Amicus* was making a film based on some of your stories?

**R. Chatwynd-Hayes:** When I was informed that Milton Subotsky was considering making a film based on four of my stories, I went over the moon. I thought, "Gosh, a film! My fortune is made!" Alas, it was not, but I did have fun visiting the set and realizing that all of the dialogue that these famous people were speaking was mine.

**SS:** Were you asked to write the script?

**RC-H:** No. I still don't know why Milton employed several scriptwriters. I could have done the job in a single morning.

**SS:** Did you enjoy the finished film?

**RC-H:** For a long time I did not like the film. I thought it was rather silly and gave the impression that every story needed more action. But, of course, Milton hated dialogue, maintaining that films should be visual . . . which was all very well, but it could end up with the people on the screen just giving each other meaningful looks.

**SS:** Have you reconsidered your verdict?

**RC-H:** Well, after I had seen it several times on television, I changed my mind. Kevin Connor had left his mark as director. It was his first directing job; up till then, he had been an editor.

**SS:** What is your favorite story in the film?

**RC-H:** The best story—or rather, the one that came over more forcibly than the other three—was "An Act of Kindness" with Donald Pleasence and his daughter, Angela. That really stood out and got over what I had in mind when writing the original story. "The Gatecrasher" was supposed to be based on Jack the Ripper, though that point was completely overlooked by the scriptwriters. "The Door" was a lovely idea, the dialogue all mine, and Lesley-Anne Down made a very attractive appearance. From then on, she shot to fame as Lady Georgina in *UPSTAIRS, DOWNSTAIRS*. Of course, Peter Cushing was absolutely great as the shopkeeper.

**SS:** So you are satisfied?

**RC-H:** Yes, all things being equal, I am well-satisfied with the film—after due consideration, you understand. Much more satisfied than I am with *THE MONSTER CLUB*.

—Scot D. Ryerson





# Frankenstein Created Woman

Director Freddie Francis' *THE EVIL OF FRANKENSTEIN* (1964) was the only film in the Hammer Frankenstein series that attempted to emulate the old Universal films, with a Karloffian monster and a plot lifted from *SON OF FRANKENSTEIN* (1939) and *FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE WOLF MAN* (1943). It was the weakest in the Hammer series, partly because of its slavish imitation of the Universal series (it was financed by Universal) and partly because the usual director of the series, Terence Fisher, was absent.

These flaws were corrected in the next in the series, *FRANKENSTEIN CREATED WOMAN* (1967), which goes about as far afield from Universal as a Frankenstein movie can. Baron Frankenstein (Peter Cushing, of course) has progressed beyond brain transplants and now works in the bizarre, quasireligious arena of "soul transplants." He's still operating in familiar Hammer territory, though: that corner of the world that seems to be a Bavaria populated entirely by the English upper and lower classes.

This time, the good Baron transforms a crippled innkeeper's daughter (the late Susan Denberg, a former *Playboy* Playmate) into a beautiful woman—but, as always, he just can't quite get it right. She's beautiful, all right, but she has murderous impulses, thanks to the soul that Frankenstein has transplanted into her: that of her guillotined boyfriend (Robert Morris), who was framed for murder by three local thugs.

The script by Anthony Hinds (writing, as usual, under the name John Elder) trips over into the—shall we say—light fantastic. On the surface, the idea of a soul transplant seems completely absurd. At their best, though, Hammer Horrors were grown-up fairy tales, and *FRANKENSTEIN CREATED WOMAN* comes across as a demented version of "The Ugly Duckling." When Denberg becomes beautiful, she epitomizes Fisher's auteur theory of the "attraction of evil"—she's gorgeous but deadly, with

a tendency to murder with axes the men who framed her boyfriend, removing their heads in a sort of poetic, if gruesome, justice.

Cushing is in peak form here as the Baron, particularly in a courtroom scene in which his condescending attitude toward authority is played with a light touch, somewhere between menace and mirth. The Baron is kinder and gentler

age person misses the point of his Machiavellian ways. Fisher favorite Thorley Walters plays his Watsonlike older assistant with charm and compassion, in perfect counterpoint to Frankenstein's coldness. It makes one wish they had done a Holmes film together.

Arthur Grant's photography is stunning, particularly during the climax in the forest glade, a bucolic setting

of purple flowers and green leaves in which—how's this for incongruity?—Denberg stabs the last of the three murderers and lifts her boyfriend's head out of her picnic basket, whereupon it proceeds to tell her that she did a good job and now can "rest."

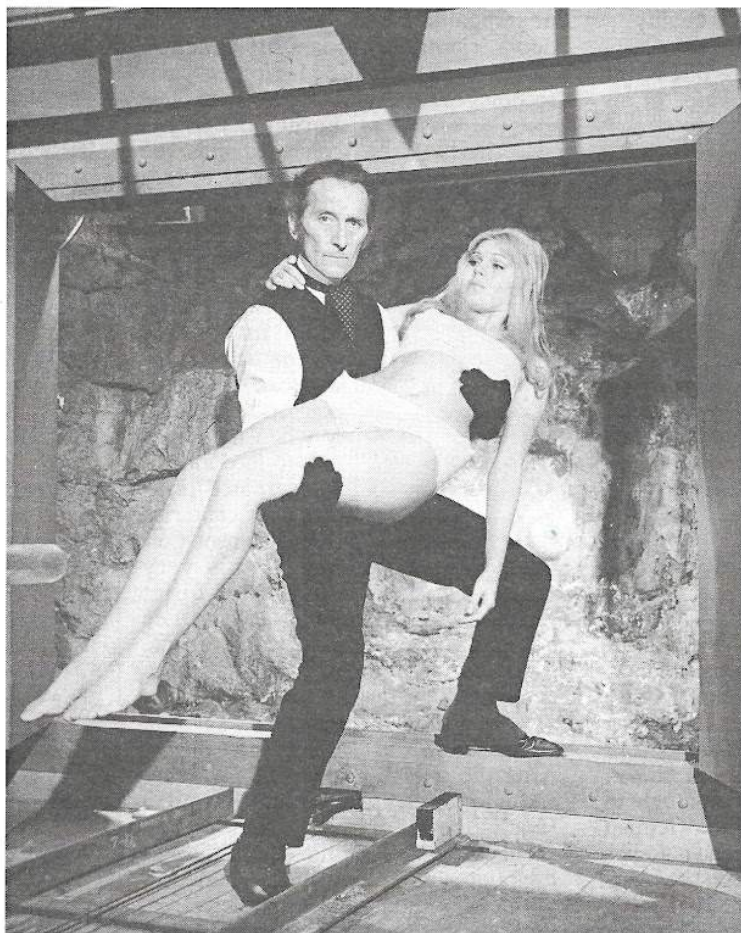
On first viewing, *FRANKENSTEIN CREATED WOMAN* may disappoint some fans—there's no real "monster" and the story takes some strange twists and turns. However, the idea of a bisexual murderer—a woman with the soul of a man—is pretty potent, even though it isn't fully developed.

Fisher was never concerned with monsters; he was interested in people and the effects that bizarre situations would have on them. For all the holes in the plot, *FRANKENSTEIN CREATED WOMAN* is one of the few Hammer Films that can be taken on several levels (has Frankenstein become a sort of god?) and it has a tremendous amount of human interest. The acting is quite good, with Denberg surprisingly eff-

fective in a difficult dual role (although her voice is dubbed).

Hammer's *FRANKENSTEIN CREATED WOMAN* is a film that grows on you. For Cushing fans, it's a must-see; for fans of the late, great Terence Fisher, it's a film that goes a long way toward proving that he was one of the greatest horror filmmakers of all time.

—Bruce G. Hallenbeck



**CARRY ON, FRANKENSTEIN?** No, it's Peter Cushing and Susan Denberg in 1967's *FRANKENSTEIN CREATED WOMAN*, a sex-switching Gothic thriller that has grown in stature over the years. It was the fourth of Cushing's six appearances as Baron Victor Frankenstein.

here than in most Hammer Frankenstein films, although he isn't above letting his hapless young assistant go to the guillotine just so that he can obtain the boy's soul for his experiment.

For the most part, though, in this outing Cushing plays Frankenstein as a kind of Sherlock Holmes gone wrong, an arrogant, snooty, brilliant fellow who just can't understand why the aver-



# THE MUMMY

**I**s there an actor who's never been asked whether, given a choice, he or she would prefer playing a hero or a villain? The stock answer, of course, is that the villainous roles are the best, the most colorful, and ultimately the most challenging. Peter Cushing complicates the issue by bringing vivid splashes of color and depth of characterization to even the most mundane heroic roles. Hero or villain, he is invariably the most interesting character in any movie graced by his presence, regardless of the film's quality.

THE MUMMY (1959) finds Cushing in heroic mode, and it is one of his finest showings, easily the equal of his

peerless Van Helsing and even his Sherlock Holmes. (Though mine is admittedly the minority view among devout mummy followers, I shall stick to my guns.) As dedicated archeologist John Banning, despoiler of an Egyptian tomb, shadowed by the immortal mummy Kharis, the actor displays his usual expertise at playing men of science, turning an unremarkable role into a nicely observed and finely detailed performance.

The movie has long been (falsely) discredited as a bastard remake of the better-known Boris Karloff version of 1932—one of the milestones of horror, directed by Karl Freund, who brought to it some of the grandeur of the German silents. (Freund served as cinematographer on Fritz Lang's 1926 classic METROPOLIS, and other UFA films.) The Hammer version, in contrast, veers precariously close to the chintzy exoticism of a Hollywood desert epic, sort of a bargain-basement LAND OF THE PHAROAHs (1955). But such comparisons are meaningless; the Hammer film is less a remake of the Freund picture than a retread of Universal's Kharis series of the 40s, especially the depressingly hackneyed THE MUMMY'S TOMB (1942). Pitting the Hammer MUMMY against less formidable competition, it shapes up a good deal more impressively and easily comes out on top.

Still, the movie works better in part than as a whole. Director Terence Fisher resists every temptation to prune Jimmy

Sangster's intelligent but clumsily structured script, which is weighed down by needless padding, excessive conversation, and tiresome redundancies. To compensate, there are some fine horror highlights; particularly such exciting scenes as Kharis rising from a slimy green mire and, later, paralyzing his victims in the Mummy's familiar stranglehold.

In the title role, Christopher Lee, who is physically one of the most agile horror stars, proves to be a fearsome, unstoppable fiend. Bursting through doors, ripping iron bars off windows barred for protection, and effortlessly absconding with the leading lady (Yvonne



Peter Cushing and Yvonne Furneaux

Furneaux) in his bandaged arms, the Mummy is truly a monster to be reckoned with, a far cry from the stiff, shuffling creature of the Universal days. Most impressive are the actor's unexpected flashes of poignancy, especially when he comes face-to-face with his reincarnated princess after centuries of entombment. Curiously, this very quality of quiet pathos, which Lee hoped to convey in his Dracula persona, registers far more persuasively here even under the makeup and wrappings.

One of THE MUMMY's sharpest scenes, though, is one of its least flashy. After the savage murders of his father and uncle (Felix Aylmer and Raymond Huntley) at the hands of the Mummy, archaeologist Banning learns that an Egyptian stranger has newly settled in the neighborhood and turns detective. Ignoring warnings from the doltish police inspector (Eddie Byrne), Banning dashes off to confront his neighbor (George Pastell), who turns out to be the high priest harboring Kharis. There ensues a shrewdly-executed game of cat and mouse as Banning, smug in his Victorian decorum, goads his host into exposing his own culpability in the crimes. With the stage now set for Kharis to be released from his marble sarcophagus one last time, the film ends with the Mummy turning on the priest and dramatically sinking back into the bog as the constabulary opens fire. Warts and all, Hammer never made a better Mummy movie.

—Michael Brunas

Released in 1958, HORROR OF DRACULA (called simply DRACULA in England) was Hammer Film's second excursion into the realm of Gothic terror (the first being 1957's THE CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN) and the second teaming of Peter Cushing and Christopher Lee.

The film tells a pared-down version of Bram Stoker's original story. Jonathan Harker (John Van Eyssen) journeys to Castle Dracula, presumably to serve as the Count's private librarian. Entering the spacious, cobweb-free interior of the castle (courtesy of Bernard Robinson, Hammer's masterful production designer), the weary traveler finds a note from his mysterious employer, expressing his sorrow at being unable to greet Harker personally. (Dracula has gone to the trouble to prepare a meal for the librarian, however.) Soon, Harker has a strange encounter with a beautiful, dark-haired woman (Valerie Gaunt as the first of Hammer's vampire-women-in-white). She seductively pleads for Harker's help in escaping the clutches of the Count—

## Horror of Dracula

a cue for the nobleman himself to put in a terse appearance, and for Christopher Lee to embark on a journey of his own, one resulting in his playing the character on screen more often than any other actor.

Dracula shows Harker to a tastefully-appointed bedroom, then departs. Alone, Harker puts pen to diary, and we learn the real reason for his hitting the castle's books: It seems that, unlike his literary inspiration, this Jonathan Harker is aware from the start that Dracula is a vampire and, indeed, has come to beard the dragon in its den. ("It only remains for me to await the daylight hours, when, with God's help, I will forever end this man's strange reign of terror.")

Naturally, it doesn't quite work out that way. Harker fails in his mission and ends up transformed into the very thing he had sought to kill. Thus, when Dr. Van Helsing (Cushing) arrives at the castle to discover what has become of his fellow vampire hunter, he has no choice but to end Harker's unholy existence. (Never one to pass up a good stake, he also finds humanity of the vampire woman, but bids to his chagrin that the Lord of the Undead has already fled to body parts unknown.)

Van Helsing breaks the news of Harker's death to Arthur and Mina Holmwood (Michael Gough and Melissa Stribling), learning from them that Jonathan's fiancée, Lucy (Carol Marsh), has taken ill with a mysterious ailment. Discovering the tell-tale mark of the vampire on Lucy's throat, the good doctor orders the Holmwoods to place garlic in the girl's room—



garlic which, in time-honored tradition, is promptly removed by the maid, Gerda (Olga Dickie). Naturally, Lucy becomes Dracula's latest victim.

It remains only for the vampirized Lucy to put the bite on a child (Janine Faye), for Van Helsing and Holmwood to put Lucy to rest, for Mina to fall under the Count's thrall, and for Dracula to meet his doom in what remains, even today, his best-staged death scene, to bring *HORROR OF DRACULA* to a thrilling climax.

Peter Cushing gives a top-notch performance as the unorthodox doctor, and is matched every step of the way by Lee as the Count. (Incidentally, Lee's actual foot-

steps were removed from *HORROR OF DRACULA*'s soundtrack for his grand entrance, making the event even more unsettling than it would have been otherwise.) Cushing's Van Helsing is a methodical, vigorous, and intense crusader, a man who is a more than worthy adversary for the Vampire King. Unlike Universal's 1931 *DRACULA*, which falls flat the minute it leaves the cobweb-filled ruins of Castle Dracula, Hammer's version only becomes better when Van Helsing takes over the narrative lead. It's a very athletic role and, with the exception of the climactic leap to pull the curtains from a handy window—thus letting in the vampire-killing

dawn—Cushing does it all with no help from the stunt-man's union.

*HORROR OF DRACULA* is superbly directed by Terence Fisher from a script by Jimmy Sangster. Much of Stoker's plot was jettisoned, including the characters of Renfield and Quincey Morris. Sangster made the decision to deny Dracula the power to change into a bat or wolf, reportedly reasoning that a less fantastic menace would make for a more frightening one. No mention was ever made of the fact that a Dracula denied the power of transformation was a Dracula who would come in on budget.

—Sean Farrell

## NIGHT CREATURES

Unlike Universal, which pigeonholed Boris Karloff and Bela Lugosi almost exclusively in shock-film roles, Hammer was a bit more broadminded in its treatment of Peter Cushing. (Christopher Lee, on the other hand, was not quite as fortunate.) In the excellent suspense film *CASH ON DEMAND* (1961), Cushing is letter-perfect as a bank president who—on Christmas Eve, no less—does a Scrooge-like turn after a harrowing encounter with a gentleman thief (Andre Morell).

*CAPTAIN CLEGG* was another welcome respite from the laboratories and cobwebby Gothic trappings of Cushing's signature hits. Distributed in the U.S. by

than the average Hammer "B" film (as well as such over-touted "A" features as 1967's *FRANKENSTEIN CREATED WOMAN*). As for Peter Cushing, *NIGHT CREATURES* offered him a role rich in nuance and character, containing elements of wry humor, warmth, and authority.

A lusty tale of smugglers running contraband liquor across 18th-century England, *NIGHT CREATURES* benefits greatly from Peter Graham Scott's crisp, decisive direction and a well-wrought script by Anthony Hinds (hiding behind the pseudonym John Elder). It was a remake of *DR. SYN* (1937), a British film directed by Roy William Neill, which was the swan song of distinguished stage and screen star George Arliss. A third version, *DR. SYN, ALIAS THE SCARECROW*, directed by James Neilson and featuring Patrick McGeehan, was also produced and released theatrically in Britain; in the U.S., however, it was retitled *THE SCARECROW OF ROMNEY MARSH* and presented as a three-part serial on *WALT DISNEY'S WONDERFUL WORLD OF COLOR* in February 1964.

His hair concealed under a prim Ben Franklin wig, Cushing exudes charm and kindness as Dr. Blyss, vicar of a tiny seaport village, who is actually the notorious pirate Nathaniel Clegg. Years before, Clegg was sentenced to death, but, seconds after the hangman's noose was placed around his neck, he was snatched from the gallows by the downtrodden townspeople, wearied of living under the crushing tyranny of the Crown. This benevolent gesture had a redeeming effect on the buccaneer. Turning his back on his past, Clegg, in the guise of the vicar, devoted himself to safeguarding the welfare of his people. Renewing his assault on the monarchy, Clegg organized a smuggling ring, which he directs from behind the pulpit, defying the King's militia.

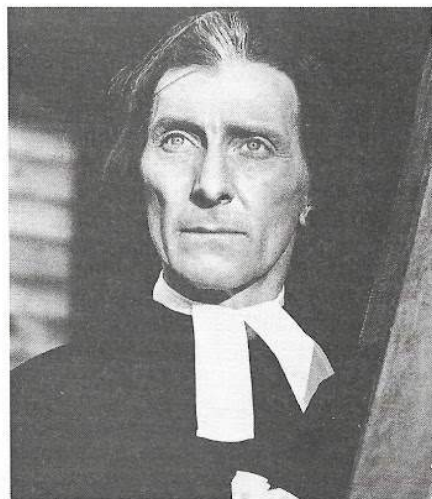
The plot of *NIGHT CREATURES* focuses on the determined efforts of the staunch Captain Collier (Patrick Allen) and his brutal revenue men to crack the illegal operation. (Allen is familiar to fans of the Granada Sherlock Holmes television series as Colonel Sebastian Moran.) Blyss and Collier match wits in a little game of cat-and-mouse, and soon it becomes apparent to the harried captain that Blyss is actually his old adversary, Clegg, come to life. (The vicar's collar conceals the tell-tale burn marks of the noose on his neck.)

And who are the Night Creatures? Phantom horsemen who roam the marshlands after sunset? Actually, they're Clegg and his confederates, disguised as luminous skeletons and exploiting an old legend in order to conduct their clandestine wine- and brandy-running activities. It's a gratuitous touch, perhaps designed to appeal to the horror trade, but it's also a spookily effective one. Ditto the eyes peering out of the scarecrow's face, which actually belongs to one of Clegg's men (Oliver Reed), whose assignment it is to warn the smugglers of any impending danger.

Besides Reed, who's cast on the side of the angels and still manages to look debauched, the cast boasts such familiar faces of the British horror screen as Michael Ripper, Martin Benson, and Jack MacGowran. Yvonne Romain, who died giving birth to Reed in 1961's *THE CURSE OF THE WEREWOLF*, is again closely bonded to the beefy actor, but in an entirely different way: She plays his sweetheart. Her character, Imogene, takes on greater significance when it is revealed that she is Captain Clegg's stepdaughter, courtesy of a mulatto brute (Milton Reid) who raped the pirate's wife and, in a sadistic sequence, has his ears and tongue severed for his trouble.

A nice change of pace for Peter Cushing and an enjoyable diversion for his fans, *NIGHT CREATURES* ranks as one of the Hammer House of Horror's most underrated programmers.

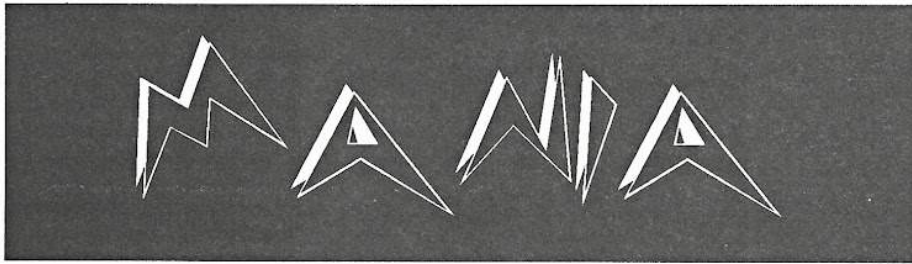
—John Brunas



Peter Cushing as Dr. Blyss

Universal International under the descriptive title *NIGHT CREATURES* (in an effort to boost the dividends of an "all-horror" pairing with Terence Fisher's remake of *THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA*), this dashing period piece has been undeservedly eclipsed by Hammer's more exuberant monster rallies. This is unfortunate, as *NIGHT CREATURES* is better-written and -directed





Released in England as *FLESH AND THE FIENDS* and later reissued State-side under such misleading titles as *THE FIENDISH GHOULS* and *PSYCHO KILLERS*, *MANIA* is rich in atmosphere. Gilling's script is thought-provoking at times and jolting at others. Berman's evocative black-and-white photography and John Elphick's sets add immeasurably to the film's mood. The cast is another plus. Pleasence, Rose, Whitelaw, and Cushing are its greatest assets; all give fine performances under Gilling's careful and more-than-competent direction. Critically, *MANIA* was lauded. *The Times* of London called it "a horrific story . . . concisely written with tension dramatically sustained." *Variety* warned that "there are one or two strong meat scenes, but it should go down well . . . with the big, varied audiences that go for this sort of fare."

Berman and Baker were hardly strangers to horror and science fiction, having produced such cult favorites as *BLOOD OF THE VAMPIRE* (1958), *THE CRAWLING EYE* (1958), and *JACK THE RIPPER* (1960). *MANIA* is no less entertaining than its predecessors. It is a frightening little gem that just happens to be based on a true story.

—Deborah Del Vecchio

As the director of a medical academy, Dr. Robert Knox (Peter Cushing) an anatomist in 19th-century Edinburgh, believes that nothing should deter the study of the human body for the potential betterment of medical science. Because it is illegal to obtain bodies for research unless they are those of condemned criminals, Knox is forced to deal with grave robbers. Eventually he forms an association with two men, Burke and Hare (played by George Rose and Donald Pleasence).

Discovering that there is a lot of loot to be had by providing doctors with corpses, and that the fresher the body, the higher its value, Burke and Hare decide to take the process one step further: They turn to murder to keep the academy supplied with "subjects." However, in their greed, they make some fatal mistakes by killing, successively, a local prostitute, Mary Paterson (Billie Whitelaw); her boyfriend, Chris Jackson (John Cairney); and a village simpleton, Daft Jamie (Melvyn Hayes). All three victims were healthy, young, and well-known in the community.

When one of the townswomen witnesses Jamie's murder, she informs the police. Suspecting that Knox is collaborating with the body snatchers, the police go to the academy, where they find Jamie's body being prepared for study. Although Knox is not charged with collusion, his many enemies in the medical council try to use his association with Burke and Hare to discredit him.

Hare turns King's evidence to save himself. Burke is put on trial for murder and, found guilty, is hanged. Hare is released by the police, but he is met by several angry townspeople, who exact their own form of justice by blinding the killer with a torch. (Historically, Hare was blinded, but not by a torch: The terrified grave robber was tossed in quicklime.)

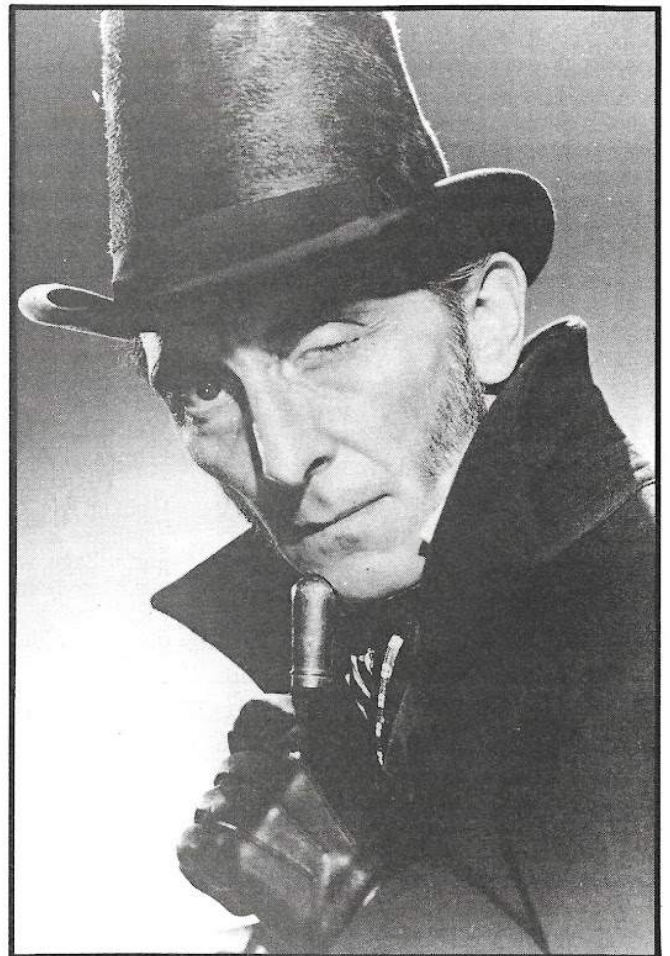
Knox continues to teach. Never formally implicated in the murders and exonerated by the medical council, he is nonetheless broken in spirit. Knox is now hated and feared by the people who had once respected him and his efforts to turn out knowledgeable, competent physicians. (The real Knox fled Edinburgh and set up shop in London.)

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Although they pale in comparison to today's ever-growing list of mass murderers and serial killers, William Burke

and Willie Hare caused quite a sensation in their day and became two of the most infamous criminals in history. They had previously been exploited in the writings of such notables as Robert Louis Stevenson (in his short story "The Body Snatcher") and Dylan Thomas (in his screenplay *THE DOCTOR AND THE DEVILS*). However, *MANIA* producers Monty Berman and Robert S. Baker decided to cut costs by using an original screenplay penned by co-producer and director John Gilling. Production was nearly abandoned when the filmmakers were threatened with a lawsuit by the Rank Organization, owners of the Dylan Thomas script. (Evidently Rank was unaware that the actual court records consulted by Gilling were in the public domain.) When nothing came of Rank's action, Berman, Baker, and Gilling formed their own company, Triad, and production began. Joining Rose and Pleasence in major roles were June Laverick, Dermot Walsh (the former Mr. Hazel Court), and newcomer Billie Whitelaw.

For the role of Dr. Knox, the prominent Scottish anatomist who formed a macabre partnership with the killers and willingly turned a blind eye to their nefarious activities, Berman and Baker sought and got Peter Cushing. They could not have made a better choice. Doubtless they wanted the star because of his outstanding performances as Baron Frankenstein in *THE CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN* (1957) and *REVENGE OF FRANKENSTEIN* (1958). What they probably didn't realize was that Cushing had based the Baron, at least in part, on Dr. Knox and was already well-prepared to take on the role.





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# The Revenge of Frankenstein

*I swore I would have my revenge.  
They will never be rid of me.*

—Dr. Victor Stein

All sequels have an inherent problem: living up to their predecessors. Only rarely, as with Universal's *THE BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN*, (1935) does a sequel equal or improve upon the original. Happily, 1959's *THE REVENGE OF FRANKENSTEIN* is one of those very few. Indeed, it can be argued that it is more successful than 1957's *THE CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN*, which, for all its good points, including a sterling performance by Peter Cushing, is the retelling of a story that everyone already knows.

*REVENGE* breaks new ground and spins the story in an entirely new direction, freeing Baron Frankenstein from the confines of his claustrophobic castle, his pitiful failure of a creation, his dubious relationship with his simpering Elizabeth, and even his now-abhorred name. Why has his name become so inconvenient? Simple: At the end of *CURSE*, the Baron is a broken man about to be led to the guillotine. He is scheduled to be executed for the murders committed by his homicidal creation, which has since been destroyed. No one, save his traitor of an assistant, believes he had brought it to life. In *REVENGE*, however, Frankenstein is infamous throughout Europe for having done just that! This revision is necessary to the plot, but it is still jarring when seeing both films back to back.

The most obvious change, however, is in Baron Frankenstein himself. In the first film he is an amoral, sociopathic monomaniac, willing to sacrifice anyone to his own purposes. He is the true monster of the tale, and only the wit, charm, intelligence, and restraint of Peter Cushing makes him watchable. With a lesser actor, the scenery would have been shredded and devoured long before the closing credits.

In *REVENGE*, though, the Baron's brush with the guillotine seems to have brought about a moral regeneration. True, there is the small matter of a priest's murder, but that is done when he is still Baron Frankenstein. As Dr. Stein, fashionable doctor to fashionable ladies in the town of Carlsburg, he donates much of his time to a free clinic for the poor. Stein's charitable inclinations, however, spring from his need for fresh limbs for the body he is building in his secret lab. Unlike the Baron, though, he

doesn't run about killing people for their brains; instead, he accepts a volunteer, Karl, a crippled hunchback who would take any risk to have a new body. With his mordant wit and courage, Stein is a far more likeable mad scientist: Contrast the Baron, cowering before his own creation, with Dr. Stein, attempting to out-face a mob of enraged patients armed with clubs and knives. This is the true Prometheus, dangerous to cross, but admirable in intent.

Peter Cushing is at the top of his Frankenstein form, playing Dr. Stein as antihero instead of villain, and infusing

the misguided angel of mercy, fills her limited role with grace. (This series is not kind to women. They are almost always portrayed as victims, sluts, or fools. It is significant that Kleve, though attracted to Margaret, sticks with Frankenstein at story's end.) George Woodbridge ably plays the brutish janitor who attacks the helpless Karl. The tragic victim of the piece, Karl is played by two actors: Oscar Quitak as the "freak" who would be a man, and Michael Gwynn as the postoperative Karl. Gwynn achieves a truly chilling transformation with only subtle makeup, a bit of lighting, and an

extremely mobile and expressive face. His horror as Karl reverts to his earlier self makes the performance quite poignant. Also worthy of mention are veterans Lionel Jeffries and Michael Ripper as a delicious pair of besotted grave-robbers, and Richard Wordsworth as a snooping attendant with an interesting philosophy about the dangers of washing.

Director Terence Fisher keeps the action moving at a steady pace, and fills the screen with colorful imagery. There are no wasted shots, no secondary plot to slow the action. Credit must go to art director Bernard Robinson, who, on a minuscule budget, creates such divergent sets as the chamber of the pompous Medical Council, and the grungy, grimy clinic for the poor.

The script, written by Jimmy Sangster and Burford James, fills what otherwise might be turgid moments with wit and humor. At one point, Stein and Kleve discuss their chimp's sudden proclivity for raw meat:

*Stein:* I discovered it soon after the operation. He et his wife.

*Kleve:* He et another monkey?

*Stein:* But what else would he be married to?

The decision to focus on the Baron in the Hammer series was a stroke of genius. When Boris Karloff tired of the Universal series, it was soon obvious that, without his inimitable blend of ferocity and pathos, the monster was little more than a big, shambling prop. How much better to train the camera on his articulate, driven creator. If the timing had been different, what a movie could have been made: Karloff as Monster, Cushing as Frankenstein, the two gentlest of gentlemen playing their most famous roles, together...

—Kenneth Schachtman



Michael Gwynn and Eunice Gayson

his own humanity into the character whenever possible. His doctor is crusty, misogynistic, and iconoclastic, and does not suffer fools gladly, but he is totally dedicated to his work and is almost tender in his care of Karl. Cushing's steely blue eyes, the subtlety of his movements, and his aura of exalted intelligence give his character—even while hip-deep in blood—an air of civility, creating a wonderful dichotomy.

Stein is colored with shades of nobility, so the burden of his experiment's failure lies with others. As Dr. Hans Kleve, unwitting stimulus of the tragedy, Francis Matthews fills his performance with enthusiasm and energy. For the first and last time in the series, the Baron has an aide who is worthy of him, albeit one who is a bit of a blabbermouth. Eunice Gayson, as Margaret,



# Our Man on Baker Street

## *Of "Mane" and Morse*

On Tuesday, 20th of October, I really was on Baker Street—in the Sherlock Holmes Hotel, to be precise. I was attending the launch of the facsimile edition of "The Lion's Mane" by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. The original manuscript has only just come to light, and the current owner has allowed the Sherlock Holmes Society of London, along with Westminster Libraries, to present the text in a handsome facsimile edition with a foreword by Colin Dexter, the writer of the Inspector Morse books.

The launch was a splendid affair. Not only were there lashings of wine and some good food, but, in addition, the dramatic arm of the Holmes Society gave a spirited

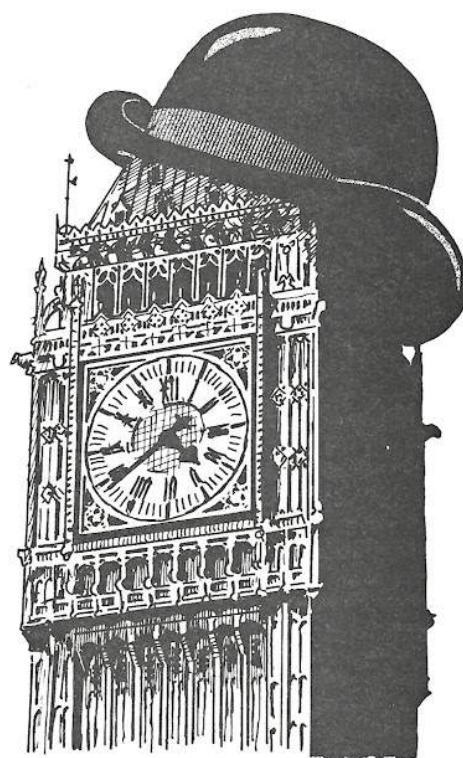
reading of "The Lion's Mane." This was followed by an entertaining address by Colin Dexter. He did admit that, although he was more than usually flattered to be asked to pen the foreword to this smart volume, he was disappointed that the story in question was "probably the worst tale in the whole Sherlockian Canon." The reason for this, Dexter maintained, was because "Watson is absent and the plot is no great shakes." Added to this was the problem of Holmes acting as his own chronicler. In doing so, he reveals a disappointing weakness in his own brilliance. As Dexter states in his Foreword, "It is the relationship between Holmes and Watson—that immortal pair—which must always be at the heart of things: and we should be grateful that Conan Doyle was doubtless fully aware of this fact, and experimented so little with giving any first-person narration to Sherlock Holmes himself."

After the official activities, I grabbed a few moments with Dexter to chat about that other great detective, his great detective, Chief Inspector Morse. There is a new novel out, *The Way through the Woods*, which has had very good press here in Britain and has fuelled rumors that maybe the Morse series on television is not quite at an end after all. When I quizzed Mr. Dexter on this point, he smiled beguilingly: "Well, there is one set of stories yet to be screened, and now they are talking about filming *The Wench is Dead* [an earlier novel] as a Christmas special for '93." So the door is left open, and I suspect that we will, in time, see *The Way through the Woods* on screen also.

(If you are interested in obtaining a copy of *The Lion's Mane*, please contact Marylebone Library, Marylebone Road, London, NW1 5PS.)

## *Poirot vs. Alleyn*

This autumn sees a three-part adaptation of Joseph Conrad's *The Secret Agent* on BBC



TV. The cast includes David Suchet in the title role and Patrick Malahide as the Assistant Commissioner of Police. It's interesting that these two actors will be seen working happily together, because come January they will be involved in a tussle for ratings. Suchet as POIROT (ITV) and Malahide as INSPECTOR ALLEYN (BBC) are scheduled to be shown at the same time on Sunday evenings. Such is the craziness of television planners.

## *Whither Lestrade?*

When I received the cast list from Granada for their latest Sherlock Holmes production, *THE MISTRESS OF GLAVEN* (formerly *THE NOBLE BACHELOR*), I was shocked to see that Inspector Lestrade was to be played by Geoffrey Beavers (who?). Where, I asked myself, was Colin Jeavons, who has, in many ways, made the part his own? I investigated this little mystery, and the solution is simple. Unfortunately, Jeavons was not available for the role; so, after some deliberation, they have decided to rename this Scotland Yard man.

—David Stuart Davies



Much to the chagrin of the many fans of the talented Colin Jeavons, the actor will not appear as Inspector Lestrade in the latest Holmes entry. At least Granada has had the good sense not to recast the role.

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DC's recent *Night Cries* presents an uncomfortable reality for seekers of escapist comic literature. Though the story is exceptional in plot, artwork, layout, and editing, it is nevertheless difficult not to be pained by the significance of the message.

Increased emphasis on realism in comic literature has led writer Archie Goodwin and artist Scott Hampton to draw readers into the previously unexplored, uncomfortable area of child abuse and the lives that it inevitably affects. Goodwin wisely avoids idealistic preaching. Instead, he weaves an intriguing Bat-mystery con-

cerning widespread abuse, incorporating elements of the perpetuating chain that occurs as the legacy of pain is passed down through successive generations.

The weight of the story's message is underscored by Hampton's haunting paintings, which assault the reader with aggressive lines and angles. Executed in sepia, olive, and blue tones, the somber artwork oppressively accents the sad and mysterious story line.

At the very least, *Night Cries* is an unpredictable detective yarn with a surprise ending. And that's not such a terrible thing, is it?

\*\*\*

Riding on the cult success of Anne Rice's *Vampire Chronicles*, Innovation Comics is helping to reestablish a strong following in quality horror in a field over-run with horrible—not horror—comics.

Published in 1976, Rice's novel *Interview with the Vampire* was followed by *The Vampire Lestat* (1985), *The Queen of the Damned* (1988), and *The Tale of the Body Thief* (1992). Innovation has produced beautifully painted adaptations of the original stories, bringing Rice's shocking images to life (so to speak). Artists Daerick Gross (*Necroscope*) and Joseph Phillips utilize the comic medium to its fullest in the *Lestat* and *Interview* interpretations.

Satisfying her fans' lust, Rice's work also appears in *The Vampire Companion* in

words and pictures. The *Companion* provides an often-overlooked perspective on the artists and writers associated with Rice.

Also in sequential artform is Rice's *The Master of Rampling Gate*, which originally appeared in *Redbook* as a short story.

\*\*\*

Innovation is much more than a new medium for Anne Rice alone. Currently the company produces the *Lost in Space* and *Quantum Leap* titles, two series presenting new stories based on their respective television programs.

*Lost in Space* takes place a few years in the future—the future, that is, of the TV show's present, which is, of course, our future. We see the Robinson family, Dr. Smith, and their robot struggling with personal dilemmas. Judy, who has blossomed into a buxom space babe, tries to find her place in a high-tech world. Similarly, Will, now 16 and given to locking his bedroom door, realizes the frustration of having no potential mates.

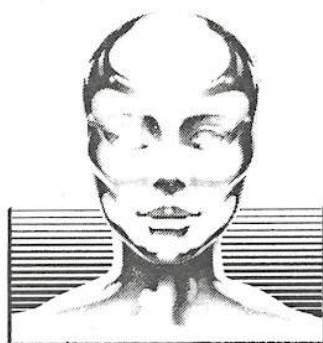
Both *Quantum Leap* and *Lost in Space* are brilliantly composed and illustrated. Under the guidance of David Campiti, writers Terry Collins, Karen May, and Andy Mangels deal sensitively with such innovative (for comics) issues as puberty and homosexuality. The writers never depend on tired clichés or sermons on how

*Continued on page 100*

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## COMIC CORNER

# Martin Powell's Sherlock Holmes

by Paul Robb

Writer Martin Powell is credited with reviving Sherlock Holmes in the comics format with his critically acclaimed *Scarlet in Gaslight* miniseries for Eternity. In this series, Powell pitted Holmes against Count Dracula and brought a supernatural aura to the world of the Great Detective.

"I discovered Sherlock Holmes in high school," Powell recalls. "I was always an avid reader when I was a kid. I did the first issue of *Scarlet in Gaslight* primarily as an exercise. No one seemed to think it was very remarkable. I was kind of patted on the head and told it was very entertaining but not what they wanted—until I sent it to Eternity."

The series was nominated for the prestigious Eisner Award, but lost to Marvel's *Silver Surfer*.

Powell notes that if it weren't for two Holmes novels featuring Dracula (*Sherlock Holmes vs. Dracula* by Loren Estleman and *The Holmes-Dracula File* by Fred Saberhagen), he might not have tried his hand at it himself. "I thought, 'Well, why can't I write one?'" he says with a laugh.

Powell has a fondness for Dracula, so it seemed only natural to pit him against Holmes. His efforts had fans wishing there had been more of a confrontation between the two characters, but Powell doubts the two will ever face off again. "I know there seems to be some regret from fans that I didn't do more with them, but I felt a brief meeting was best."

Powell followed *Scarlet* with the *Case of Blind Fear* miniseries, in which Holmes tackles H.G. Wells' Invisible Man, and his recent two-parter, *Return of the Devil*, which records Holmes' last case and his reasons for retirement. He wrote another miniseries, *The Ghosts of Dracula*, for Eternity, which he calls the "real" sequel to *Blind Fear*. (Holmes has a cameo in the second issue.) He also has another project in the works, *Dracula Rex: 1990s*.

According to Powell, one reason for adding fantasy elements to his Holmes stories is that Powell felt there was a need for a new approach. "That's why Holmes has never succeeded in his own comic-book series, because the stories were too stiff and stilted, whether they were adaptations or original stories."

**Paul Robb is a contributor to Wizard, The Guide to Comics. He is the assistant editor of The Pilot-News in Plymouth, IN.**

Powell tries to keep as close to Doyle's original characterizations as possible, calling Holmes a grim, driven man. "I like the lunatic edge Jeremy Brett gives him."

As for Watson, he says he prefers to write him as an intelligent, sharp man who's already had his share of adventures before meeting Holmes, rather than the dull fool he's often portrayed as in films.

In *Return of the Devil*, Powell brings back Moriarty, who died at the conclusion of *Scarlet in Gaslight*. "I'm not bringing him back alive, it's not a flashback, and it's not a ghost when Holmes sees him while looking out the window. Yet it's safe to say he's not in the story, but the plot revolves around it."

Confused? One clue is that the title refers to two things: first, the return of Holmes' cocaine problem, and second, the return of Spring Heel Jack, an apparition seen in Victorian England. "Sightings of this demonic figure in the 1820s through 1900 made him the Bigfoot and UFO of his day, and it's strange that not many people have heard of him. He's been forgotten," Powell noted.

*Return* is the story of Holmes' last case before his retirement. "This will explain why Holmes supposedly retired when he was 49. It always puzzled me that he retired so early. Doyle just moved things forward, to around 1925-1927, having Watson talk about Holmes retired on his Sussex bee farm, but he never gave Holmes' last cases. Oh, he mentioned Holmes' government work that he was doing before World War One, but I thought it curious that he gave us the first case and not the last case he ever worked on. That's why I decided to do it."

Powell continues, "The story is told from various viewpoints: Watson's narrative, and others when he's not there. Watson actually plays a big part because I wanted to tie up a lot of things between Holmes and Watson. They both need each other, but Holmes needs Watson much more."

Powell wants to explore Holmes' character and bring out little details that no one else may have done anything with, such as the reason that Holmes chose his particular career instead of becoming an actor or a scientist.

"I decided to make it a guilt trip. He's not a victim; he caused the problem. There are a lot of different ways to imagine it, such as horrendous crime in his past. I've hinted at some of this before," he said. "I wanted to expose the taboos of his early life and develop a disturbing twist to his long battle with Professor Moriarty."

A lot of people ask who the writer will team Holmes with next. Powell is insistent that he wants to get away from that concept. "I don't want to do a Holmes Team-Up title."

Powell will be adapting *The Hound of the Baskervilles* for Innovation in a graphic novel tentatively set for 1993. That

60-page work will feature a cover by artist Jim Steranko.

"I'm really pleased with it. I think it's the definitive version of *The Hound*. I did have to change the ending to make it more dynamic," Powell said. "It's my homage to Doyle, writing the 'real' Holmes, since I've been known to be rather radical in my stories."

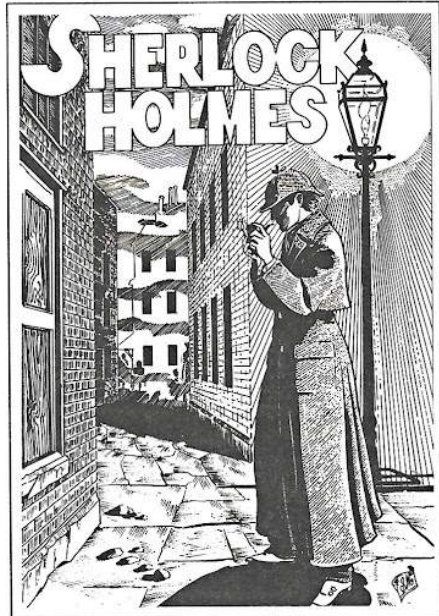
He recalled receiving a phone call from Dame Jean Conan Doyle shortly after *Scarlet* came out; he was surprised when she told him she was pleased. "She said she thought her father would be, too, and that made me glow—but it perplexed me at the same time. I don't know why; maybe it's because they're not your typical Sherlock Holmes stories."

In Doyle's "The Final Problem," you can see how the story was set up so that Holmes could be brought back—it's a popular myth that Doyle hated Holmes, and I don't think he did. I am surprised he left Moriarty so dead. I've never been satisfied by anything that's been written about the return of Moriarty."

Aside from his comics work, Powell may soon get his chance to do a Holmes short story. The story fits his chronology, taking place after *Return of the Devil*, and is called "The Loch Ness Horror." Powell is doing it for a new publication, *Sherlock Holmes Mystery Magazine* from Alpha Productions, which has no clear target release date as of yet.

Describing that story, he calls it a very "adult Sherlock Holmes story as if written by Clive Barker. It is the weirdest. It has dream sequences, flash backs, and is also the sexiest Sherlock Holmes story. Very demonic and evil—very disturbing."

He adds that it is his "origin" story for Holmes, telling exactly what the tragedy was that affected Holmes. "There's nothing taboo in this—people might hate me after they read this one!"





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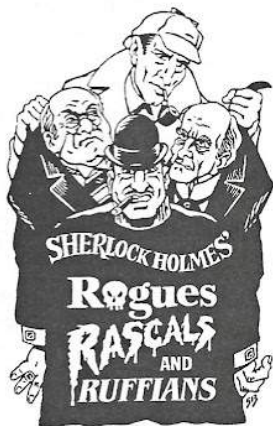
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# Book Ends

## The Scarlet Street Review of Books

### THE WHITECHAPEL HORRORS

Edward B. Hanna

Carroll & Graf Publishers, Inc., 1992.

395 pages—\$19.95

If further proof is needed that—excluding ads for *Scarlet Street*—there is precious little truth in advertising, one need only read the dust-jacket copy for Edward B. Hanna's Sherlock Holmes pastiche *The Whitechapel Horrors*. Here, one learns that the novel in question is "vintage Holmes, a ripping good mystery worthy of the great detective and his eminent creator. You're sure to feel as though you are in the actual presence of the great sleuth, himself, and you will delight in this wonderful addition to the Watson chronicles."

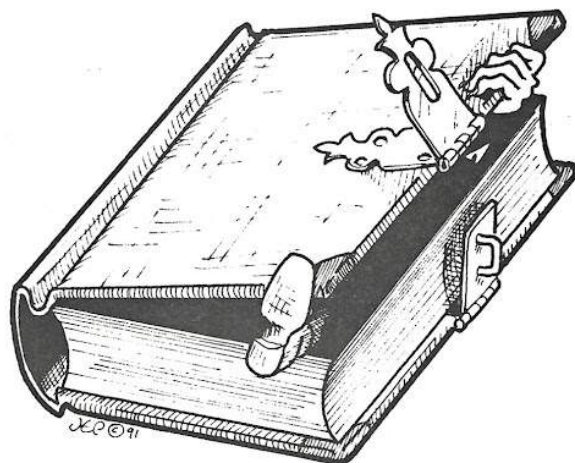
I don't know whose presence I was in while I was reading *The Whitechapel Horrors*, but I'm pretty sure that it wasn't Sherlock Holmes.

I suspect it was Edward B. Hanna.

Hanna's third-person account of Holmes' attempt to solve the Jack the Ripper murders of 1888 is, with the exception of dialogue lifted verbatim from the Canon, almost entirely devoid of the special charm and atmosphere that makes Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's stories immortal. Why is a "wonderful addition to the Watson chronicles," an addition supposedly compiled from Watson's notes, not written in his dis-

tinctive first-person voice? It can't be because Hanna dramatizes events at which Watson is not present; Conan Doyle did the same, and got around it by the simple expedient of having the good doctor report the events after the fact. (Often, the reader spends the day holed up with Watson in the Baker Street rooms, there to be filled in on the investigation's progress by Holmes upon the latter's return from the field.) By banishing Watson's distinctive voice from so much of his narrative, Hanna robs his readers of their best possible guide through the late Victorian era. On the other hand, Hanna's rendering of Watson is so completely muddleheaded—making the character unbearably stuffy, priggish, and uncharitable toward those who fail to meet his unbending moral standards—that perhaps it's for the best.

Mrs. Hudson, Wiggins, Billy, Mycroft Holmes, and even Shinwell Johnson (who, thanks to the tin-eared Cockney dialect with which the character is lumbered, wears out his welcome with his second utterance) are equal to the unattractive standards set by the author's Dr. Watson. Only Inspector Lestrade manages to survive unscathed, by virtue of his not appearing in *The Whitechapel Horrors* at all. (No fool, Lestrade.)



Sherlock Holmes himself comes off rather better than his companions, but the characterization is oddly flawed by allowing the reader to get too close to the Master Sleuth. Conan Doyle's creation is completely successful only when his cool, clinical persona is tempered by the more humane one of Watson; as a humane Watson is beyond Hanna's ken, Holmes suffers as well. Nowhere is this more evident than in the several scenes in which Baker Street's best-known residents confront and/or discuss the homosexual subculture of Victorian England. In a chapter that offends for reasons other than those clearly intended by the author, the duo attends a gathering of London's gay elite and meets—who else?—Mr. Oscar Wilde. (If Hanna finds it difficult to get under the collective skins of Holmes and Watson, he finds it almost impossible to describe, without distaste, Wilde's clothes, much less his personality.) Watson's disgust at meeting Wilde is lovingly rendered, as is his loathing for every member of the gathering, all of whom inevitably speak to him in "mincing" voices and call him "love-ey." (Not to be outdone, Holmes finds the whole subject "repugnant.") All this literary gay-bashing is by way of leading up to the possibility that Jack the Ripper may have been homosexual—hardly a new or startling proposition, but one which has rarely been voiced with such vengeful relish on the part of an advocate. (Conan Doyle was not above "gracing" his characters with his own personal dislikes and prejudices, but they were, at least, his characters; Hanna sullies them with unbridled homophobia.)

*The Whitechapel Horrors* is not the first account of the Great Detective's involvement in the Ripper killings—there have been novelizations of the two Holmes/Ripper films, *A STUDY IN TERROR* (1965) and *MURDER BY DECREE* (1979), the former penned by no less a whodunit superstar than Ellery Queen, and Holmes himself turned out to be Saucy Jack in Michael Dibdin's *The Last Sherlock Holmes Story* (1978)—but it is the first to dispense with so basic a requirement of



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the genre as a solution to the mystery. After trudging doggedly through nearly 400 pages of text, including 24 pages of notes, one of which informs us that Lestrade worked with Holmes on *The Sign of the Four*—it was, of course, Athelney Jones—the careworn reader is rewarded by Holmes' blithe admission that the clues he has followed were "inconsequential details, nothing more. Merely annoying little distractions . . ."

Proving that, if nothing else, *The Whitechapel Horrors* is a book capable of reviewing itself.

—Drew Sullivan

#### THE GREAT DETECTIVE PICTURES

James Robert Parish  
and Michael R. Pitts  
Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1990.  
616 pages—\$59.50

This not-so-weighty tome is the latest in *The Great . . . Pictures* series exploring various movie genres. It is a (supposedly) exhaustively researched work, covering the detective movie from 1905 to the present day, with plot outlines, reviews, and cast lists. As a reference book, unfortunately, it has major flaws that render it nearly useless.

The films are listed alphabetically, with no cross reference, no table of contents, and no index of names. Just imagine: You

know that Peter Cushing played Holmes in a film other than *THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES* (1959), but the title escapes you. Needing the information, you must wade through each and every entry until you arrive, bleary-eyed, at *THE MASKS OF DEATH* (1984). This is no way to run a reference book! There is, to be fair, a decent listing of radio/TV detective series, a bibliography, and a chronology of the movies listed, but none of these would help you with the above problem.

*The Great Detective Pictures* is flawed in other areas, one of which is the excessive concentration given to film noir and "B" movies. This work would be better titled *Fixated on the Forties*, or, perhaps, *Charlie Chan . . . and Others*. Indeed, browsing through the pages, one begins to feel as if one is being politely haunted by Mr. Chan. Parish and Pitts not only devote 34 pages to films in which the ubiquitous Oriental gentleman is found on, at, or in a wearying number of places, but also list his nongeographical titles alphabetically, from *DARK ALIBI* (1946) to *SHADOWS OVER CHINATOWN* (1947). This seems an excessive amount of space to give a series that was "B" only at its best. I have enjoyed many of these pictures, but they are obviously dated. The Chans produced by Monogram went downhill very quickly, and, unlike Pitts and Parish, I've never seen much that was amusing in the bug-eyed, quiver-

ing caricatures of Stepin Fetchit and Mantan Moreland (playing Chan's black assistants). This is not political correctness, but merely good taste and common sense. Stereotypes are not funny when repeated *ad nauseum*; besides, even as a child I wondered why men who were so clearly afraid of their own shadows would work for a detective. So I cannot understand the fascination this series has for the authors. Three or four Chans would have sufficed, especially given the more substantial movies that have been left out of this work.

Another major failing is the obvious preference for detective series. Pitts and Parish seem to believe that a movie is not a success unless it spawns a host of limp remakes or a plethora of second-rate formula sequels. Perhaps I'm being iconoclastic, but one incomparable *LAURA* (1944) is more worthy of mention than any number of Nancy Drews. Also deemed unworthy of notice by the authors are such films as *TOUCH OF EVIL* (1958), *THE LIST OF ADRIAN MESSENGER* (1963), *THE STRANGLER* (1964), *NO WAY TO TREAT A LADY* (1968), and *SANCTUARY OF FEAR* (1979). *MURDER BY DEATH* (1976) is excoriated, but where are *THE PINK PANTHER* and *A SHOT IN THE DARK* (both 1964)? Quite a few rather frivolous TV movies are given pages of their own, but the PBS series *MYSTERY!* is handed a scant few lines, with Joan

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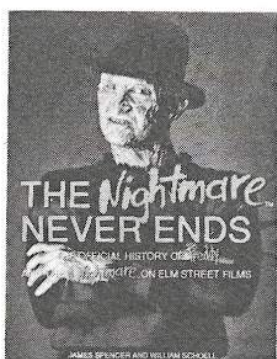
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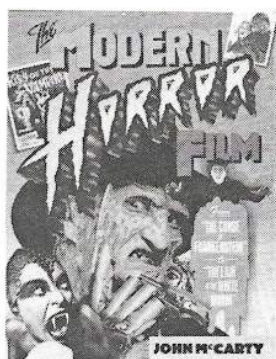
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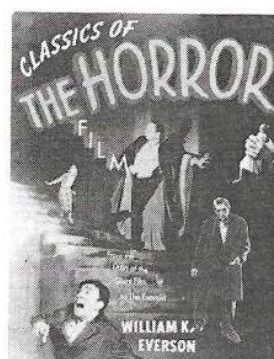
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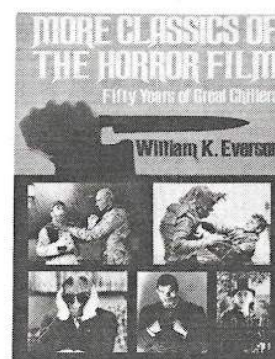
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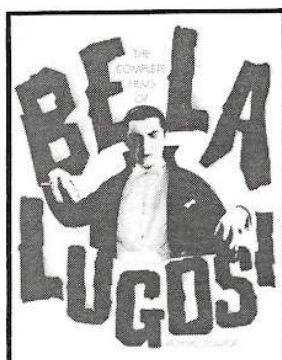
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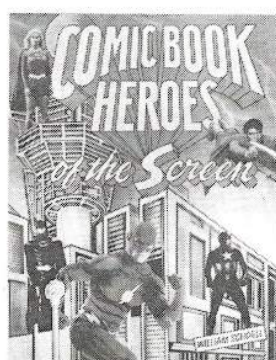
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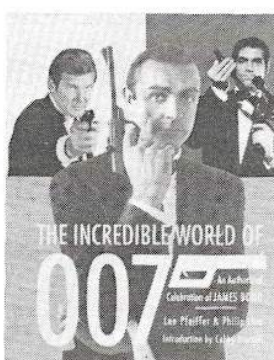
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Hickson being described as "solid," a term better applied to furniture than to actresses.

The essays themselves are fuller and more descriptive than those in Pitts' two-volume *Famous Movie Detectives*. I suspect, however, that they are no more accurate. In the plot outline for *MURDER ON THE ORIENT EXPRESS* (1974), for instance, that poor train is, once again, going in the wrong direction, chugging its way to Constantinople (named Istanbul in the film)—which is exceedingly strange, given that it left that storied city early in the picture. Worse, after the murder occurs, Poirot "has the coach detached from the rest of the train" so that he can have time to solve the mystery. No such event occurs, and I'll be damned if I can figure out how Pitts or Parish arrived at it. Given these egregious errors involving so famous a movie, how seriously can the other plot outlines be taken? The authors have obviously not seen some of the movies they are supposedly analyzing, and are merely perpetuating the errors of others.

A final cavil: Whoever proofread this book should never be allowed near galley sheets again. In an essay on another Poirot film, *EVIL UNDER THE SUN* (1982) becomes *MURDER UNDER THE SUN*. At another point, Pauline Kael's *5001 Nights at the Movies* has been reduced to a mere 500, and the editor must be held responsible for this weird statement made during an essay on *THE HOUND OF THE BASKER-*

*VILLES*: "The Hammer version differs from the Fox one in that the story behind the curse, set in 1974, is told as the prologue to the actual detective story, which is set at the turn of the century." Which century? Either this is total gibberish or Sir Arthur Conan Doyle is actually H.G. Wells.

The book does have its good points, if one has the patience to search. I was delighted to learn that Hercule Poirot was once played on stage by Charles Laughton, and that *THE ALPHABET MURDERS* (1966), starring Tony Randall, was originally scripted for Zero Mostel. What an image that conjures up!

I cannot, of course, recommend this confused and confusing book either as a reference work or for the casual reader. Indeed, *The Great Detective Pictures* is rather like a suspect in one of the films it discusses: plausible but untrustworthy, and capable of leading one astray. Mr. Parish, Mr. Pitts, turn off your typewriters, put down your research material, and go rent some movies! Your work can only improve.

—Ken Schactman

#### THE TALE OF THE BODY THIEF

Anne Rice

Knopf Publishers, 1992.

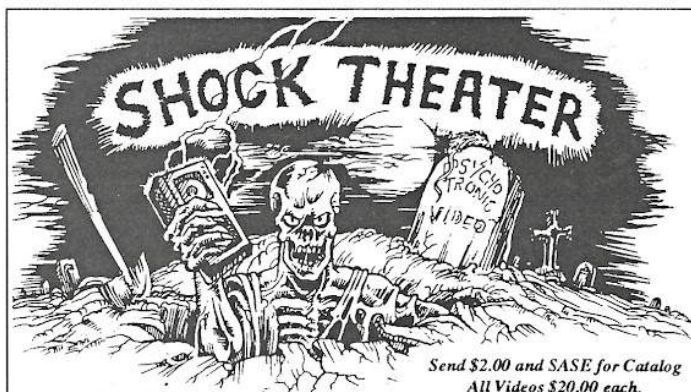
430 pages—\$24.00

The phenomenon began in 1977 with the publication of *Interview with the Vampire*, the now-classic novel in which we

were introduced to Louis, a melancholy creature of the night who told the tale of his undying life of more than two centuries. We also met the reckless and rebellious vampire Lestat, and the beautiful but vicious child/woman Claudia. It continued in 1985 with *The Vampire Lestat* and in 1988 with the epic *The Queen of the Damned*. Now, in 1992, the fourth and possibly final volume, *The Tale of the Body Thief*, continues Anne Rice's Vampire Chronicles.

It has been said that Rice has done more for the popularity of vampires than any author since Bram Stoker. The best-selling writer's fascination with the undead began while she was still a young girl. In a 1989 interview she revealed, "My first encounter with vampires was seeing the movie *DRACULA'S DAUGHTER*. I loved the tragic figure of the daughter as a regretful creature who didn't want to kill but was driven to it. Vampires are tragic; they are not pure evil. They have a conscience; they suffer loneliness."

It is just these human qualities in her inhuman characters that have sold millions of copies of Rice's books. Her vampires, though unnatural, undead beings, still hunger for love, for companionship, for acceptance, for life itself. Even in her rare short vampire story, "The Master of Rampling Gate," Rice's talent in making us care for and sympathize with her creations is undeniable. So it is again in her new novel.



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In *The Tale of the Body Thief*, the dashing, golden-haired Lestat once again takes center stage with significant supporting performances by the withdrawn Louis, Lestat's mortal friend David Talbot, an intriguing character named Mojo, and (in an unnerving reappearance) a ghostly Claudia. The Talamasca, the mysterious organization from Rice's previous novels *The Queen of the Damned* and *The Witching Hour*, also figures in the story.

Dreams and nightmarish visions prompt the main action in *The Tale of the Body Thief* as Lestat goes in search of his lost humanity. Does the "Brat Prince of Vampires" become "mortal" again? Does he find God? And just who, or what, is the Body Thief? Sorry, I'll reveal none of the plot in this review, but, needless to say, Rice spins her web with such skill and pacing that I dare any reader not to become enmeshed in the story's threads from the beginning right up to the violent and passionate homoerotic climax.

My only reservation with *The Tale of the Body Thief* is that, if this is, as Anne Rice has hinted, the last book in the Vampire Chronicles, it is a very unsatisfactory farewell to a host of enthralling characters that millions worldwide have come to re-

vere. It's sad to think that their timeless journey ends here.

—Scot D. Ryerson

## MISSING IN MANHATTAN

*The Adams Round Table*  
Longmeadow Press, 1992.  
297 pages—\$17.95

*Missing in Manhattan* is the third in a series of short-story collections by a group of mystery writers known as the Adams Round Table. (They got the name from the restaurant where they regularly meet.) Not having read the previous two volumes, I cannot compare this book to them. But if they are as good as the present collection, then it would be worth your while to seek them out.

As its title suggests, *Missing in Manhattan* contains stories about loss in the Big Apple. The loss may be of a person, such as in Judith Kelman's "Missing You," in which a woman searches for her vanished lover, or it could be a missing motive, as in Justin Scott's superb "The Commissioner's Moll," an inventive tale about a NYPD commissioner who, impressed by a young policewoman's performance at a riot, makes her his personal driver (a job that

Kathy Dee is not keen to accept, for she has her sights set on becoming a detective). The commissioner compromises: He tells her to pick out a murder case from the files, and he will help her solve it, thus giving Kathy some training in detective work. The case Kathy chooses—that of a livery-cab driver found dead with his head twisted backwards—is, needless to say, very interesting.

It is the inventive, offbeat stories that really make this book worthwhile. "Area Code 212," by Thomas Chastain, is a fine example. Told completely through telephone conversations, the story concerns a young woman's none-too-firm grip on reality. "Just Another Christmas Story," by Stanley Cohen, is a detailed slice-of-life tale about the trials of a street-corner Santa Claus who is mugged. Fascinating as well as sad, it has a gritty, realistic feel for New York street life.

"Mama's Done a Flit" by Joyce Harrington is another favorite. Penny Rhodes is starting up her new detective agency with her soon-to-be-husband, Mitchell, when she gets some disturbing news. Her mother, an extravagant, Auntie Mame type of ex-songstress named Glory Rhodes, has vanished. That's not all: She's the prime suspect in the death of her latest fiancé, Peter.



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As Penny investigates, she discovers that Peter, who was much younger than her mother, had a shady past. Funny and gripping, "Mama's Done a Flit" is an enjoyable read.

"Plumbing for Willy" is Mary Higgins Clark's contribution. Clark, one of the co-founders of the Adams Round Table, offers a cute little fable about a wealthy woman who decides to fight back on her own when her husband, Willy, is kidnapped and held for ransom. Although it lacks the gritty quality of some of the other stories, it's still fine fun.

"To Forget Mary Ellen," by Dorothy Salisbury Davis, is an intriguing and ultimately devastating story in which an ex-cop contracts a hit man to kill his battered wife. Filled with twists, it has a shocker ending proving that, no matter how people may rationalize it, crime doesn't pay.

"The Absent Present," by Judith Kelman, an interesting variation on the "high-school reunion revenge story," doesn't offer any surprises, though it is well-written. "The Great Taboo," by Lucy Freeman, is a straight murder mystery, presented in tedious fashion, as a psychiatrist interviews the obvious suspects using overblown Freudian theories.

Overall, *Missing in Manhattan* is a treat for mystery fans, whether or not you live in the Big Apple.

—Sean Farrell

## IN AND OUT OF CHARACTER

Basil Rathbone

Limelight Editions, 1962, 1987 (re-issue).  
278 pages—\$10.95

Limelight Editions' surprise re-issue of *In and Out of Character*, originally published by Doubleday in 1962, finally makes it possible for Basil Rathbone fans to add an inexpensive copy of the actor's hard-to-find autobiography to their libraries without dealing with the price-gouging ways of the rare-book market. Considering that few horror stars have penned their life stories—Peter Cushing is the only other who comes to mind—this obviously non-ghost-written book is a uniquely collectible volume.

Rathbone was a disciplined, highly cultured man; a product of a regimented, turn-of-the-century English boarding school, he established his reputation in the classical theatre of the 1920s. After his initial flush of stardom playing Romeo to Katherine Cornell's Juliet, the actor traveled west and was quickly lulled by the fast money and easy life of pre-war Hollywood. To his credit, Rathbone staunchly clung to the discriminating standards he set for himself, playing in screen adaptations of *ANNA KARENINA*, *DAVID COPPERFIELD*, and *A TALE OF TWO CITIES* (all 1935), but in a few years he was beset by the usual career compromises of an actor trying to earn a living. His customary razor-sharp

delivery and air of cool intellectual detachment made him an ideal choice to play Sherlock Holmes in 20th Century Fox's *THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES* (1939). But after playing Conan Doyle's unflappable sleuth in over a dozen films and hundreds of radio shows, Rathbone, much to his disenchantment, found it impossible to shake the character with whom he had become so identified.

Despite professional ups and downs, Rathbone reminisces good-naturedly and without a trace of bitterness, recalling such Hollywood icons as Garbo, Barrymore, Dietrich, Selznick, et al. His disdain for all but a handful of his screen roles becomes most pointed, however, as he tilts the book decisively in favor of his stage work. Unfortunately for horror fans, the movies they would most like to read about are exactly the ones that Rathbone would most like to forget. The book doesn't prove to be a gold mine for Sherlock Holmes buffs, either, as the entire series is grudgingly covered in a few scant pages.

What one does get out of this book is a fascinating portrait of a thoroughbred actor; his unwavering commitment to his craft; his touching devotion to his family; and his extreme English reserve, which results in an occasional lack of candor. Though he dotes lovingly on his second

Continued on page 98





## Seems Like Old Crimes

### THE REX STOUT LIBRARY

*Fer-De-Lance*

285 pages—1934/1992.

*The League of Frightened Men*

302 pages—1935/1992.

*The Rubber Band*

267 pages—1936/1992.

*The Red Box*

257 pages—1937/1992.

Bantam Books, \$4.99 each (paperback)

*I love to make a mistake; it is the only assurance that I cannot reasonably be expected to assume the burden of omniscience.*

—Nero Wolfe

In 1934's *Fer-de-Lance*, Rex Stout introduced us to Nero Wolfe and his able assistant, Archie Goodwin. Stout would continue to entertain us with tales of Wolfe, Archie, Fritz Brenner, Saul Panzer, and Inspector Cramer through WWII, Korea, Vietnam, and Watergate. The world was rapidly changing, but the house and staff on 35th Street remained the same. One could mark the passing of years by Wolfe's comments on current affairs, the length of women's skirts (as Archie ever-so-subtly examined their legs), and the make of Wolfe's latest car, but Wolfe himself never changed, always remaining immobile and egocentric. Rex Stout died in 1975 at the age of 89, after publishing 72 Nero Wolfe mysteries (including 46 novels). A final adventure, *Death Times Three*, was discovered and published 10 years after his death.

Due to the abundance of novels, the Wolfe series has never been available to the public in its entirety. Bantam hopes to change this by publishing the Rex Stout Library. In February 1992, Bantam released the first four novels: *Fer-de-Lance*, *The League of Frightened Men*, *The Rubber Band*, and *The Red Box*. They have since released a new novel each month. A Bantam representative reported that the series would be reprinted in the order published; however, this is not the case, as the recently-released *The Doorbell Rang* was originally published in 1965.

The new editions include introductions by well-known mystery writers. I

particularly enjoyed Stuart Kaminsky's introduction to *The Doorbell Rang*. It's easy to see that Kaminsky loves Wolfe and Archie, and he admits that they inspired his popular Toby Peters series. In addition to the introductions, the reprints contain rare facts and memorabilia from Rex Stout's personal archives. (For example, *Fer-de-Lance* includes physical descriptions of Wolfe, Archie, and a diagram of the famous office, as well as a panel from a Nero Wolfe comic that ran in 1956).

In the good old days, when paperbacks sold for 60¢, used book stores would sell books at half the cover price. For a mere \$2.00 hungry Wolfe hounds could cart home an armload of books. Stout became my favorite mystery writer then, and he still holds that title. I have spent hours searching for his novels, but have never been wholly successful... until now. Though the price has gone from 60¢ to a hefty \$4.99, I eagerly await the release of novels I've never been able to locate. It is quite some time since I've looked forward to reading a new book with such anticipation! Current mysteries are either so com-

plicated or so gory that I never finish them, or they become so "cute" that they make readers gag. Stout consistently surprised and entertained readers with his characters and plots, and the standard revelation of the killer, à la Agatha Christie, at the end of each story. The reprints have all been re-typeset, and that is their major flaw: They contain an amazing number of typographical errors. Also, the introductions have some of the facts wrong, but that's just quibbling. (Besides, it allows the knowledgeable reader to feel superior to the professional writers.)

Stout's influence can be seen in many current mysteries; he, in turn, was greatly influenced by Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes series. Wolfe is content to sit in his brownstone with his orchids and books, much like Mycroft Holmes is content to sit in the Diogenes Club. Stout also teases us with hints of past cases solved by Wolfe and Archie—cases that never appear in any of the novels—much as Watson drops hints about cases solved by Holmes.

Combining elements of both Holmes and Wolfe, John Lescroart's *Son of Holmes* was published in 1986. During the grim days of WWI, Auguste Lupa, illegitimate son of Sherlock Holmes and "the woman," undertakes to find a deadly assassin before more French intelligence agents meet their death. Lupa, an eccentric loner, loves excellent food, wears brown clothes, and has a fondness for flowers and good beer. Yellow is his favorite color. He is loyally attended by Fritz, Swiss chef with a mysterious past. Sound familiar? The author allows us to draw our own conclusions.



Nero Wolfe (Walter Connolly) crossed swords with Paul Chapin (Eduardo Ciannelli) in 1937's *THE LEAGUE OF FRIGHTENED MEN*.



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Unlike some other great fictional de-  
 tectives, Wolfe has never successfully been  
 translated to film or television. In 1936, Ed-  
 ward Arnold portrayed Wolfe, with Lionel  
 Stander as Archie Goodwin, in Columbia's  
 MEET NERO WOLFE. Stander reprised  
 his role in THE LEAGUE OF FRIGHT-  
 ENED MEN (1937), with Walter Connolly  
 doing the honors as Wolfe. Wolfe's televi-  
 sion stardom lasted one brief season in  
 1981. William Conrad appeared as Wolfe,  
 with Lee Horsley as Archie Goodwin. The  
 NBC series was woefully miscast, and never  
 caught on with audiences.

It's difficult to recommend a specific  
 Wolfe novel to new readers. Perhaps, it is  
 best to begin at the beginning: In *Fer-de-  
 Lance* (1934) we find Wolfe trying to give  
 up bootleg beer, providing he can find a  
 good bottled brew. He is also trying to cut  
 down from six quarts a day to a mere five. In  
 this first Wolfe novel, Archie drops the fact  
 that he has lived at the brownstone for  
 seven years, and tantalizes the reader  
 with vague hints as to how he acquired his  
 unusual job. Wolfe cleverly ties together the  
 murder of a poor immigrant and a wealthy  
 college professor.

*The League of Frightened Men* (1935)  
 pits Wolfe against his most interesting nem-  
 esis, Paul Chapin. Chapin had been seri-  
 ously crippled in a college hazing incident,  
 which has left him a bitter man. The youths

involved, "The League of Atonement" as  
 they have named themselves, have become  
 respected citizens. They have taken care of  
 Chapin financially, but have never realized  
 the depth of his hostility until members of  
 their league begin to die or disappear while  
 the survivors receive taunting poems. The  
 league turns to Wolfe for help. In this novel  
 we are amazed to learn that Wolfe was once  
 married to a charming woman who tried to  
 "do him in." We also find him rushing to  
 save Archie in a cab driven by (horror of  
 horrors) a woman!

*The Rubber Band* (1936) is reminis-  
 cent of Conan Doyle's *The Valley of Fear*,  
 with a secret pact made during the Gold  
 Rush, an indignant British marquis, mur-  
 der, and millions of dollars at stake.

*The Red Box* (1937) finds Wolfe in-  
 vestigating the death of a high-fashion  
 model. It's a nightmare for the misogy-  
 nistic detective, but a gift from heaven for  
 the woman-loving Goodwin.

Throughout the series Wolfe is con-  
 fronted by the New York City Police De-  
 partment, various District Attorney's Of-  
 fices, the Armed Forces, and the FBI. He  
 is threatened with imprisonment, al-  
 though it's Archie who usually sees the in-  
 side of a cell. Wolfe solves an old friend's  
 murder, as well as the murder of a child who  
 hired Wolfe for \$4.30. Archie threatens to  
 quit on numerous occasions and sometimes

earns Wolfe's highest praise: "Satisfac-  
 tory, Archie." Once in a while Wolfe  
 leaves the comforts of home and ventures  
 into the cold, cruel world—although the  
 reason usually involves food or orchids,  
 seldom a case.

Robert Goldsborough has obtained  
 permission from the Stout estate to con-  
 tinue the series. I've enjoyed his five  
 Wolfe novels, but they just aren't "the  
 real thing," perhaps because Archie now  
 uses a computer instead of his trusty  
 Underwood. For me, Nero Wolfe and  
 Archie Goodwin are forever entrenched  
 in the 30s and 40s, no matter what year the  
 novels were written.

—Susan Svehla

## BOOK ENDS

*Continued from page 96*

wife, screenwriter Ouida Bergere, the first  
 Mrs. Rathbone suspiciously comes and  
 goes in the bat of an eyelash, and the old  
 boy practically forgets the son he fathered  
 in that union. (The Rathbone offspring  
 eventually took the name John Rodion and  
 had a brief fling with acting, appearing with  
 his dad in 1939's TOWER OF LONDON.  
 Rumor has it, incidentally, that the elusive  
 "Son of Rathbone" is alive and well and liv-  
 ing in, of all places, Jersey City.)





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Arthur Ross

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MagicImage Filmbooks, 1992.

200 pages—\$19.95

MagicImage, which has published a fine series of classic-horror film scripts, has released *Creature from the Black Lagoon* as number two in its companion series of science-fiction scripts. A horror film released by Universal-International in 1954, during a period in which science fiction lorded it over horror in the cinema, CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON has always been relegated to the sci-fi category, despite the fact that the gillman's origin included none of the standard science fiction plot devices, i.e., invasions from the cosmos or atomic radiation gone wild. The monster in question, like the Mummy before him, is the prized discovery of an archaeological expedition, in this case to the unknown regions of the Amazon.

Film historian Tom Weaver takes the reins in this volume, serving as both editor and author of the production-background articles, and making this the definitive study of the making of this film. Weaver's own archaeological dig turns up, among other things, a story about the film's genesis

indirectly contributed by none other than Orson Welles! Included here are thumbnail biographies of the major cast members and a full-length interview with Ben Chapman, an actor of Tahitian background who portrayed the Creature (above water) and who shares some fascinating facts about the Creature costume.

The film script itself, a second-draft screenplay credited to Arthur Ross, does bear a resemblance to what reached the screen, but it took a total of four writers to hammer the script into the one actually used for shooting. Following Ross' work is a "step outline" by screenwriter Harry Essex, which suggests changes in character relationships, names, and action, and is closer to the final film. Also provided are many rare production stills and publicity shots (some never before published), follow-through text on the film's two sequels, REVENGE OF THE CREATURE (1955) and THE CREATURE WALKS AMONG US (1956), and preview audience reaction in the form of a questionnaire that drew wide-ranging and surprising responses. One audience member's comment: "Too many shots of the Creature."

*Creature from the Black Lagoon* will be of special interest to film students interested in the development of a script from story outline to the finished product. It is highly recommended.

—Richard Scrivani

The book is about as far away as you can get from today's tabloid-style Hollywood biographies—it was even regarded as a bit stodgy when it was first issued 30 years ago—but readers in tune with the subject may find Rathbone's highly literary prose style to their liking. It's heartening to see this former rarity back in the book shops.

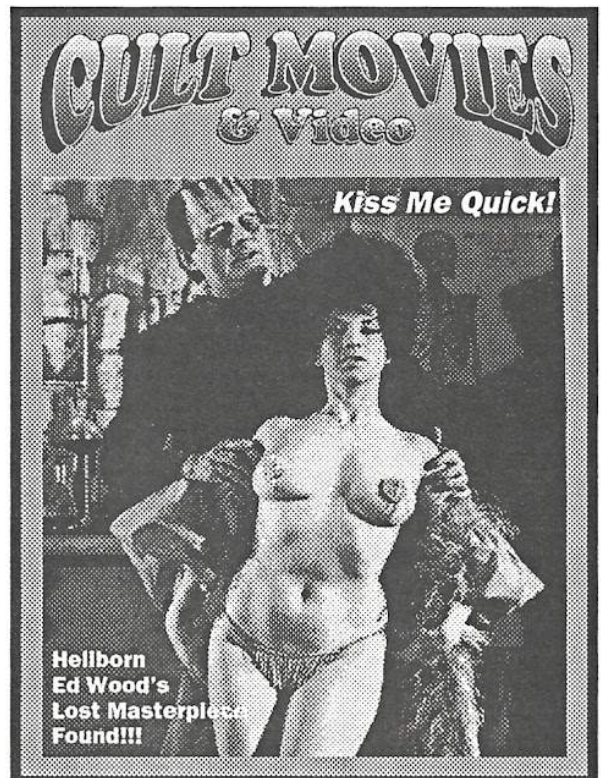
—Michael Brunas

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Jeremy Brett prepares to film a scene on the "back streets of London" for Granada's *THE MISTRESS OF GLAVEN*, an adaptation of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's "The Noble Bachelor."

## IGNOBLE BACHELOR

*Continued from page 56*

world's greatest detective. I feel that they would like to see our Mr. Brett in a full-blown Holmes adventure, with a complex mystery containing drama, suspense, and a really nasty villain. What is clear, however, is that the actor remains fascinated with and enthusiastic about Sherlock Holmes and, however the character is manifested in the future, it will be well worth our attention.

At this tantalizing point, Brett was dragged off to film. I stayed around a little longer to witness some of the shooting and take some photographs. The set was very cramped, so I decided to leave it to those who needed the space to function properly. Just as I was leaving, a grinning Jeremy Brett beckoned me over to where he was having his makeup repaired. "Did you no-

tice," he asked, "that when I walked down the alleyway, I no longer held one arm behind my back as I've done many times before?" I nodded and asked if there was a specific reason for this. His smile broadened: "It's all because of that thieving magpie, David Suchet! He's adopted the same walk for Poirot, so I've had to drop it!" Makeup restored, he wished me and the readers of *Scarlet Street* all the best and went off for a re-shoot, his arm flapping by his side.



## COMIC CORNER

*Continued from page 86*

to "do the right thing." Through it all, they manage to make the stories fun.

\*\*\*

In a sharp marketing move, DC Comics recently announced Vertigo, their best marketing move since the Prestige Format. Prestige Format Books were DC's first shot at organizing the best artists and writers of their adult-oriented titles.

Vertigo takes the concept a step further, incorporating the best of the Prestige books with new titles—among them *Enigma* and *Death* (*Sandman*'s sister)—which will let mature audiences enjoy the psychological twists of horror and mystery without the ubiquitous presence of a hero in tights.

*Sandman*; *Hellblazer*; *Doom Patrol*; *Animal Man*; *Swamp Thing*; and *Shade, the Changing Man* will all be adopted by Vertigo. Writers Neil Gaiman (*Death: The High Cost of Living*) and Peter Milligan (*Enigma*) have already taken advantage of DC's increased creative latitude. Hopefully this new line of comics will also give Nancy A. Collins (*Swamp Thing*) and Jamie Delano (*Animal Man*) the incentive to stay with DC Comics.

\*\*\*

In case you haven't already heard, Image Comics has managed to pull slightly ahead of DC Comics in newsstand sales.

This branch of Malibu Comics hit the scene last year with record sales. Its success is largely a result of its marketing strategies, which include obtaining the biggest names in the business at any cost. Malibu also controls Adventure Comics and Eternity Comics. Under these banners, Malibu

has been experimenting with offbeat horror, mystery, and alternative projects.

Written and drawn for adult tastes, one of the finest horror story lines is the adaptation by Martin Powell (*Scarlet in Gaslight*) of Brian Lumley's *Necroscope*. Chillingly painted in full color by Dae-rick Gross, *Necroscope* is a vivid psychological terror.

Previously, teamed with Patrick Olliffe, Powell gave Malibu a brilliant, chilling interpretation of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. Olliffe's detailed artwork perfectly complements the adaptation, especially in paintings that capture the ghastly image of the dismembered bride hanging by a thick chain in a huge glass cell filled with liquid. Because the four-issue series is almost impossible to find, Malibu recently released the black-and-white story as a graphic novel.

Like many unique comic projects, most of this stuff is passed over in favor of super-heroics. It takes time to weed through the garbage, but often the most fulfilling material can be discovered in the offbeat titles offered by independent publishers.

—Buddy Scalera

## FRANKENSTEIN MUST BE DESTROYED

*Continued from page 72*

FRANKENSTEIN MUST BE DESTROYED is not alone among Hammer Horrors in its preoccupation with society's dirty linen. The theme is naturally predominant in *THE CURSE OF THE WEREWOLF*, as indeed it must be in any film littered with lycanthropes, but it also informs such distinct ventures as *THE BRIDES OF DRACULA* (in which an aristocratic mother hides her decadent, diseased son from a world that thinks him dead), 1962's *THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA* (in which pandemonium rises from the cellars beneath that bastion of polite society, the opera house), 1964's *THE GORGON* (in which, during the cycle of the full moon, a woman sprouts snakes rather than fur), and 1970's *TASTE THE BLOOD OF DRACULA* (in which three Victorian gentlemen of high moral principles spend their nights, not in the performance of charitable work at the local soup kitchen, but in the performance of sexual improbabilities at a London brothel). That *FRANKENSTEIN MUST BE DESTROYED* makes perhaps the strongest case of all for the riches to be gained from a thematic reading of a "mere" horror film—whether or not those themes were foremost in the minds of the filmmakers themselves—is a tribute to Fisher and his talented cast, and augurs well for further exploration of the studio that was Hammer.

—Richard Valley

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Wolfe

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No reward.



# DARTING SHOT

Quotations compiled by Sally Jane Gellert

The fool in a hurry drinks his tea with a fork.

EARL DERR BIGGERS  
*Keeper of the Keys*

A bad play folds, and is forgotten, but in pictures we don't bury our dead. When you think it's out of your system, your daughter sees it on television and says, "My father is an idiot."

BILLY WILDER

Who knows what evil lurks in the hearts of men? The Shadow knows!

WALTER B. GIBSON  
creator of *The Shadow*

I know you have a civil tongue in your head—I sewed it there myself!

KENNETH LANGTRY  
*I Was a Teenage Frankenstein*

... any decent garbage can would be ashamed to have you found in it.

REX STOUT  
*The Red Box*

We medicals have a better way than that. When we dislike a dead friend of ours, we dissect him.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON  
*The Body Snatcher*

Why are these high-powered scientists always screwing around trying to prolong life instead of finding pleasant ways to end it?

HORACE MCCOY  
*They Shoot Horses, Don't They?*

The world's nothing but a graveyard filled with old bones.

ROSS THOMAS, writing as OLIVER BLEECK  
*The Highbinders*

In a city you thought of all life as human life. You had to live in the heart of the woods to realize that humanity was a slight ripple on the surface of a flood of life that seeped into every vacant crack, flowed into every biological vacuum the moment it occurred.

HELEN MCCLOY  
*Panic*

Art in the blood is liable to take the strangest forms.

ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE  
*The Greek Interpreter*

If you've ever read a mystery story you know that a detective never works so hard as when he's on a vacation.

EARL DERR BIGGERS  
*The Chinese Parrot*

The best time for planning a book is while you're doing the dishes.

AGATHA CHRISTIE

Any spoke will lead an ant to the hub.

REX STOUT  
*Fer-de-Lance*

The man who does not read good books has no advantage over the man who can't read them.

MARK TWAIN

Publishing is a very mysterious business. It is hard to predict what kind of sale or reception a book will have, and advertising seems to do very little good.

THOMAS WOLFE  
in a letter to his mother

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DALE LAUNER  
*Ruthless People*

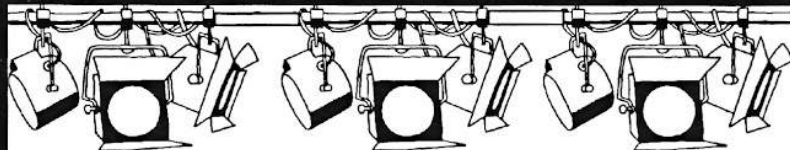
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| ADVENTURES OF TARTU                  | ROBERT DONAT, VALARIE HOBSON            | 1943 |
| ALGIERS                              | CHARLES BOYER, HEDY LAMARR              | 1938 |
| AMAZING MR. X, THE                   | TURHAN BEY, LYNN BARI,                  |      |
|                                      | CATHY O'DONNELL                         | 1948 |
| APE, THE                             | BORIS KARLOFF                           | 1940 |
| APE MAN, THE                         | BELA LUGOSI                             | 1943 |
| BAT WHISPERS, THE                    | CHESTER MORRIS, UNA MERKEL              | 1930 |
| BEHIND THE MASK                      | KANE RICHMOND, BARBARA REED             | 1946 |
| BEHIND THE MASK                      |                                         |      |
| aka SHADOW BEHIND THE MASK           |                                         |      |
| BELLS, THE (SILENT)                  | BORIS KARLOFF, CONSTANCE CUMMINGS       | 1932 |
| BENEATH THE 12 MILE REEF             | LIONEL BARRYMORE, BORIS KARLOFF         | 1926 |
| BIRD OF PARADISE                     | ROBERT WAGNER, TERRY MOORE              | 1953 |
| BIRTH OF A LEGEND & THE VIOLIN MAKER | DOLORES DEL RIO, JOEL MCCREA            | 1932 |
| OF CREMONA (SILENT)                  |                                         |      |
| BIRTH OF A NATION (SILENT)           | A PORTRAIT OF MARY PICKFORD             | 1909 |
| BLACK PIRATE, THE (SILENT)           | LILLIAN GISH                            | 1915 |
| BLOOD AND SAND (SILENT)              | DOUGLAS FAIRBANKS SR., BILLIE DOVE      | 1926 |
| BROKEN BLOSSOMS (SILENT)             | RUDOLPH VALENTINO, LILA LEE, NITA NALDI | 1922 |
| CALL HER SAVAGE                      | RICHARD BARTHELMESS, LILLIAN GISH       | 1919 |
| CAUGHT PLASTERED                     | CLARA BOW                               | 1932 |
| CHANDU THE MAGICIAN                  | WHEELER & WOOLSEY                       | 1932 |
| CHILD BRIDE - CAMP FILM              | BELA LUGOSI, EDMUND LOWE                | 1932 |
| D.O.A.                               | SHIRLEY MILLS, BOB BOLLINGER            | 1939 |
| DANGER LIGHTS                        | EDMUND O'BRIEN, PAMELA BRITTON          | 1949 |
| DIARY OF A HIGH SCHOOL BRIDE         | JEAN ARTHUR, ROBERT ARMSTRONG           | 1930 |
| DIXIANA                              | ANITA SANDS, RONALD FOSTER              | 1959 |
| DOG EAT DOG                          | BEBE DANIELS, EVERETT MARSHALL          | 1930 |
| DON Q, SON OF ZORRO, (SILENT)        | JAYNE MANSFIELD, CAMERON MITCHELL       | 1965 |
| DR. JECKYLL & MR. HYDE (SILENT)      | DOUGLAS FAIRBANKS, MARY ASTOR           | 1925 |
| EAGLE, THE (SILENT)                  | JOHN BARRYMORE, NITA NALDI              | 1920 |
| EMPEROR JONES                        | RUDOLPH VALENTINO                       | 1925 |
| EPIC THAT NEVER WAS, THE             | (BLACK ARTIST'S) PAUL ROBSON            | 1933 |
|                                      | THE STORY OF THE UNFINISHED FILM:       |      |
|                                      | I. CLAUDIUS                             | 1965 |
| EVERGREEN                            | JESSIE MATTHEWS, JEANNIE HALE           | 1934 |
| FACE IN THE FOG, A                   | JANE WITHERS, PAUL KELLY                | 1944 |
| FARMER'S WIFE, THE (SILENT)          | DIR. ALFRED HITCHCOCK                   |      |
| FISHERMAN'S WHARF                    | JAMESON THOMPSON, LILLIAN HALL DAVIS    | 1928 |
|                                      | BOBBY BREEN, LEO CARRILLO &             |      |
|                                      | SUCKER THE SEAL                         | 1940 |
| FLYING IRISHMAN, THE                 | DOUGLAS "WRONG WAY" CORRIGAN            | 1939 |
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| FREE TO LOVE (SILENT)                | CLARA BOW                               | 1925 |
| GANGS, INC.                          | ALAN LADD, JOAN WOODBURY                | 1941 |
| GENERAL, THE (SILENT)                | BUSTER KEATON                           | 1927 |
| GHOSTS ON THE LOOSE                  | EAST SIDE KIDS                          | 1943 |
| GHOUL, THE                           | BORIS KARLOFF, CEDRIC HARDWICKE,        |      |
|                                      | ERNEST THESIGER                         | 1933 |
| HAPPY GO LOVELY                      | VERA ALLEN, DAVID NIVEN                 | 1951 |
| HE WALKED BY NIGHT                   | RICHARD BASEHART, SCOTT BRADY           | 1948 |
| HI DIDDLE DIDDLE                     | DENNIS O'KEEFE, ADOLPHE MENJOU          | 1943 |
| HI GAUCHO                            | JOHN CARROLL, STEFFI DUNA               | 1935 |
| HOME OF THE BRAVE                    | LLOYD BRIDGES, FRANK LOVEJOY            | 1949 |
| HOOK, LINE AND SINKER                | WHEELER & WOOLSEY                       | 1930 |
| HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME (SILENT)     | LON CHANEY, PATSY RUTH MILLER           | 1923 |
| IMPACT                               | BRIAN DONLEVY, ELLA RAINS               | 1949 |
| INDISCRETION OF AN AMERICAN WIFE     | JENNIFER JONES, MONTGOMERY CLIFT        | 1954 |
| INTOLERANCE (SILENT)                 | LILLIAN GISH, CONSTANCE TALMADGE        | 1916 |
| INVISIBLE GHOST, THE                 | BELA LUGOSI, ANN YOUNG                  | 1941 |
| IT'S LOVE AGAIN                      | JESSIE MATTHEWS, ROBERT YOUNG           | 1936 |
| JAZZ HEAVEN                          | JOHNNY MACK BROWN                       | 1929 |
| JEW SUSS aka POWER                   | CONRAD VEIDT, FRANK VOSPER              | 1934 |
| JUNO & THE PYCOCK                    | ALFRED HITCHCOCK DIR.                   | 1929 |
| KING OF THE JUNGLE                   | BUSTER CRABBE                           | 1933 |
| KING SOLOMON'S MINES                 | (BLACK ARTIST'S) PAUL ROBESON           | 1937 |
| KISS, THE (SILENT)                   | GRETA GARBO                             | 1929 |

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| LILAC TIME (SILENT)                   | GARY COOPER                       | 1928 |
| LOVE AMONG THE MILLIONAIRES           | CLARA BOW                         | 1930 |
| MAN ON THE EIFFEL TOWER, THE          | CHARLES LAUGHTON, FRANCHOT TONE   | 1940 |
| MANTRAP                               | (SILENT) CLARA BOW                | 1926 |
| MEETING AT MIDNIGHT                   | SIDNEY TOLER, MANTAN MORELAND     | 1941 |
| MILLION DOLLAR MYSTERY (SILENT)       | JAMES KIRKWOOD SR., LILA LEE      | 1927 |
| MINE OWN EXECUTIONER                  | BURGESS MEREDITH, KILDORN MOORE   | 1947 |
| MONSTER, THE (SILENT)                 | LON CHANEY                        | 1925 |
| MR. MOTO'S LAST WARNING               | PETER LORRE, GEORGE SANDERS       | 1939 |
| MY BEST GIRL (SILENT)                 | MARY PICKFORD,                    |      |
|                                       | CHARLES "BUDDY" ROGERS            | 1927 |
| MY LADY OF WHIMS (SILENT)             | CLARA BOW                         | 1925 |
| MYSTERIOUS ISLAND, THE (SILENT)       | LIONEL BARRYMORE, JANE DALY       | 1929 |
| NIGHT MY NUMBER CAME UP, THE          | MICHAEL REDGRAVE                  | 1955 |
| NO LIMIT                              | CLARA BOW                         | 1931 |
| OLD DARK HOUSE, THE                   | BORIS KARLOFF,                    |      |
|                                       | MELVIN DOUGLAS LAUGHTON           | 1932 |
| PEACH O' RENO                         | BERT WHEELER, ROBERT WOOLSEY      | 1931 |
| POOR LITTLE RICH GIRL, THE (SILENT)   | MARY PICKFORD                     | 1917 |
| PRIMROSE PATH, THE (SILENT)           | CLARA BOW                         | 1925 |
| RAILROADED                            | JOHN IRELAND, SHEILA RYAN         | 1947 |
| RING, THE (SILENT)                    | DIR: ALFRED HITCHCOCK             |      |
|                                       | CARL BRISSON, LILLIAN HALL DAVIS  | 1927 |
|                                       | DOUGLAS FAIRBANKS SR.             | 1922 |
| ROBIN HOOD (SILENT)                   |                                   |      |
| SALLY OF THE SAWDUST (SILENT)         | W.C. FIELDS, CAROL DEMPSTER       | 1925 |
| aka POPPY                             | ROD CAMERON, YVONNE DE CARLO      | 1945 |
| SALOME, WHERE SHE DANCED              | PAUL ROBESON, LESLIE BANKS        | 1935 |
| SANDERS OF THE RIVER (BLACK ARTIST'S) | CLARA BOW                         | 1929 |
| SATURDAY NIGHT KID, THE               | RANDOLPH SCOTT, HELEN GAHAGAN     | 1935 |
| SHE                                   | RUDOLPH VALENTINO, AGNES AYRES    | 1921 |
| SHEIK, THE (SILENT)                   | CHARLES STARRETT, ROBERT WARWICK  | 1935 |
| SHOT IN THE DARK, A                   | WHEELER & WOOLSEY                 | 1936 |
| SILLY BILLIES                         | RUDOLPH VALENTINO, VILMA BARKY,   |      |
| SON OF THE SHEIK (SILENT)             | AGNES AYRES                       | 1926 |
| SONS OF STEEL                         | CHARLES STARRETT                  | 1934 |
| SPEAKERS (SILENT)                     | MARY PICKFORD                     | 1926 |
| SPEAK EASILY                          | JIMMY DURANTE, HEDDA HOPPER,      |      |
|                                       | BUSTER KEATON                     | 1932 |
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| SUNNY                                 | ANNE NEAGLE, RAY BOLGER           | 1941 |
| SUNRISE (SILENT)                      | JANET GAYNOR, GEORGE O'BRIEN      | 1927 |
| SWAN, THE (SILENT)                    | ADOLPH MENJOU, RICHARDO CORTEZ    | 1925 |
| TELL IT TO THE MARINES (SILENT)       | LON CHANEY                        | 1927 |
| THAT CERTAIN THING (SILENT)           | DIR: FRANK CAPRA                  |      |
| THEY MADE ME A CRIMINAL               | VIOLA DANA, RALPH GRAVES          | 1928 |
| THIRD MAN, THE                        | JOHN GARFIELD, DEAD END KIDS      | 1939 |
| THURSDAY'S CHILD                      | ORSON WELLES, JOSEPH COTTEN       | 1949 |
| TRANSATLANTIC TUNNEL                  | STEWART GRANGER, SALLY ANN HOWES  | 1943 |
| TRUE TO THE NAVY                      | RICHARD DIX, LESLIE BANKS         | 1935 |
| TWO SENORITAS FROM CHICAGO            | CLARA BOW                         | 1930 |
| UNCHASTENED WOMAN, THE (SILENT)       | JOAN DAVIS, JINX FALKENBURG       | 1943 |
| UNHOLY THREE, THE (SILENT)            | THEA BARA                         | 1925 |
| UNHOLY THREE, THE (SOUND)             | LON CHANEY                        | 1925 |
| WALKING BACK (SILENT)                 | LON CHANEY                        | 1930 |
| WAY DOWN EAST (SILENT)                | SUE CAROL                         | 1928 |
| WEST OF ZANZIBAR (SILENT)             | LILLIAN GISH, RICHARD BARTHELMESS | 1920 |
| WHILE THE CITY SLEEPS (SILENT)        | LON CHANEY, LIONEL BARRYMORE      | 1929 |
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| WILD PARTY, THE                       | FRANKIE DARRO, ROCHELLE HUDSON    | 1933 |
| WHERE EAST IS EAST (SILENT)           | CLARA BOW                         | 1929 |
| WIZARD OF OZ, THE (SILENT)            | LON CHANEY                        | 1929 |
|                                       | LERRY SEMON, OLIVER HARDY         | 1925 |

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# "THE BLACK SCORPION"

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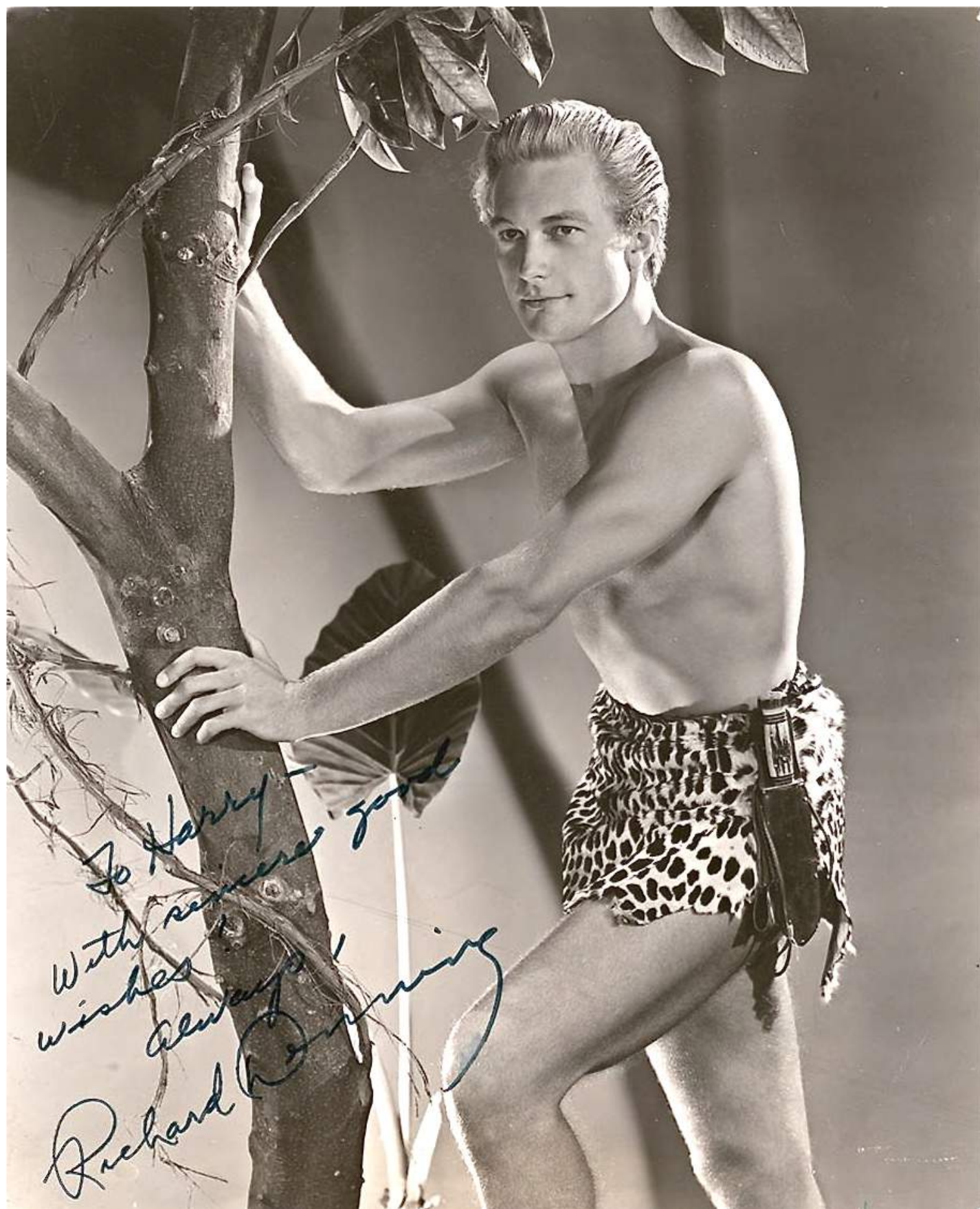
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We defy you not to  
get a genuine case of  
the horrors when you see

# "THE BLACK SCORPION"

**BLACK--**so you can't  
see him until he's ready to get you!

**BLOODLESS--**  
That's why he wants yours!

**UNCUT!**  
SHOWN  
EXACTLY AS  
FILMED!



**DON'T BE ASHAMED TO SCREAM!**  
**IT HELPS RELIEVE THE TENSION!**

**WE URGE YOU NOT TO PANIC**  
**OR BOLT FROM YOUR SEATS!**

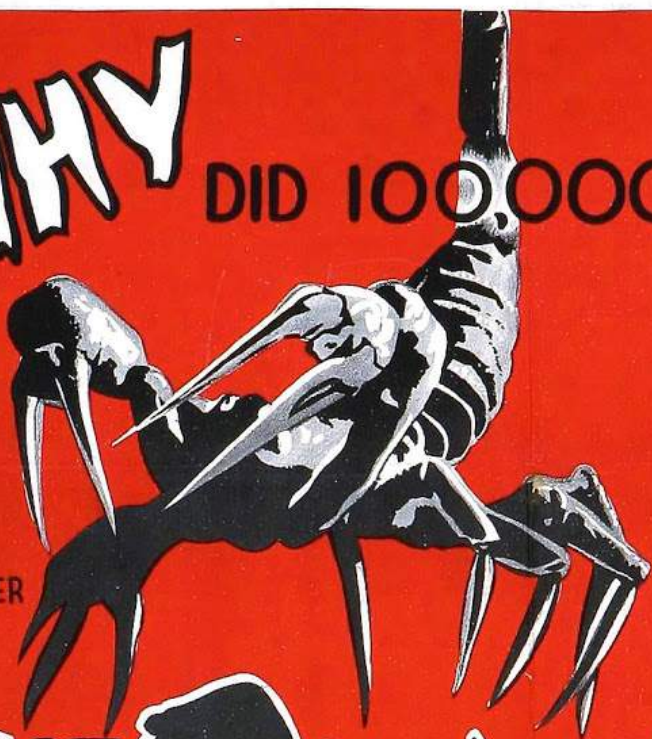
CASTING:  
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**WHY**

**DID 100,000 PEOPLE  
PANIC?**

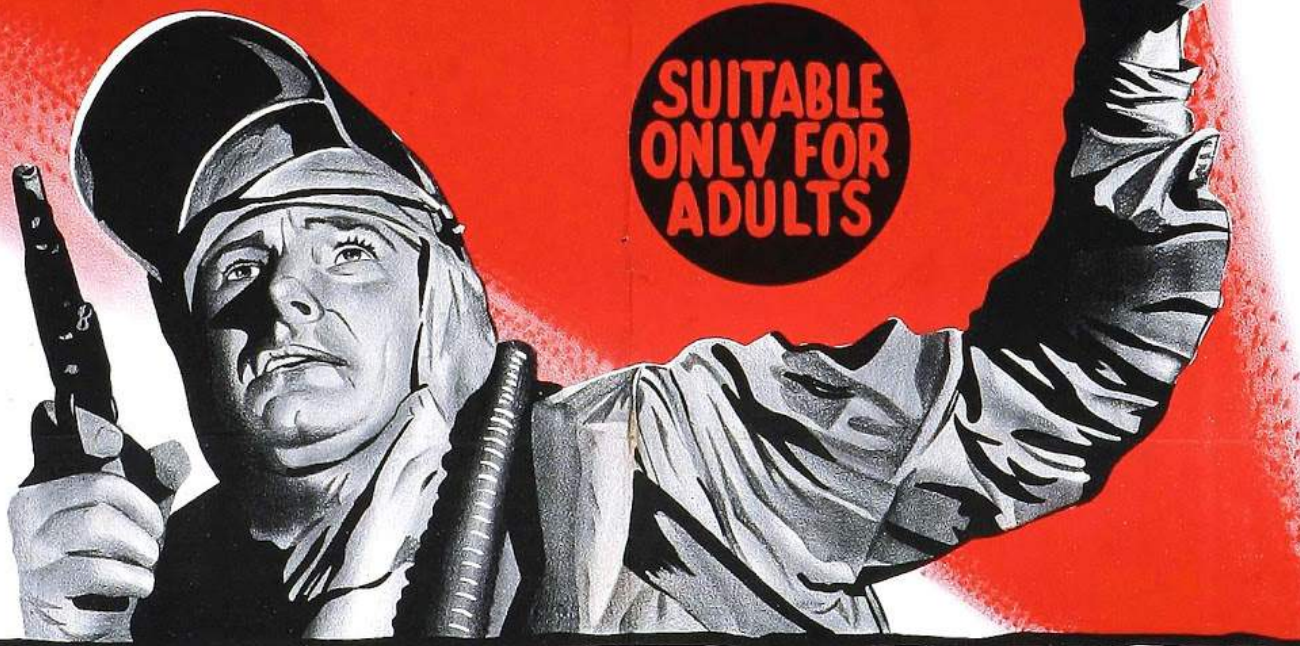
WARNER  
BROS.  
PRESENT



**His bullets bit  
into it . . . yet  
on it came!**

# THE BLACK SCORPION

**SUITABLE  
ONLY FOR  
ADULTS**



STARRING

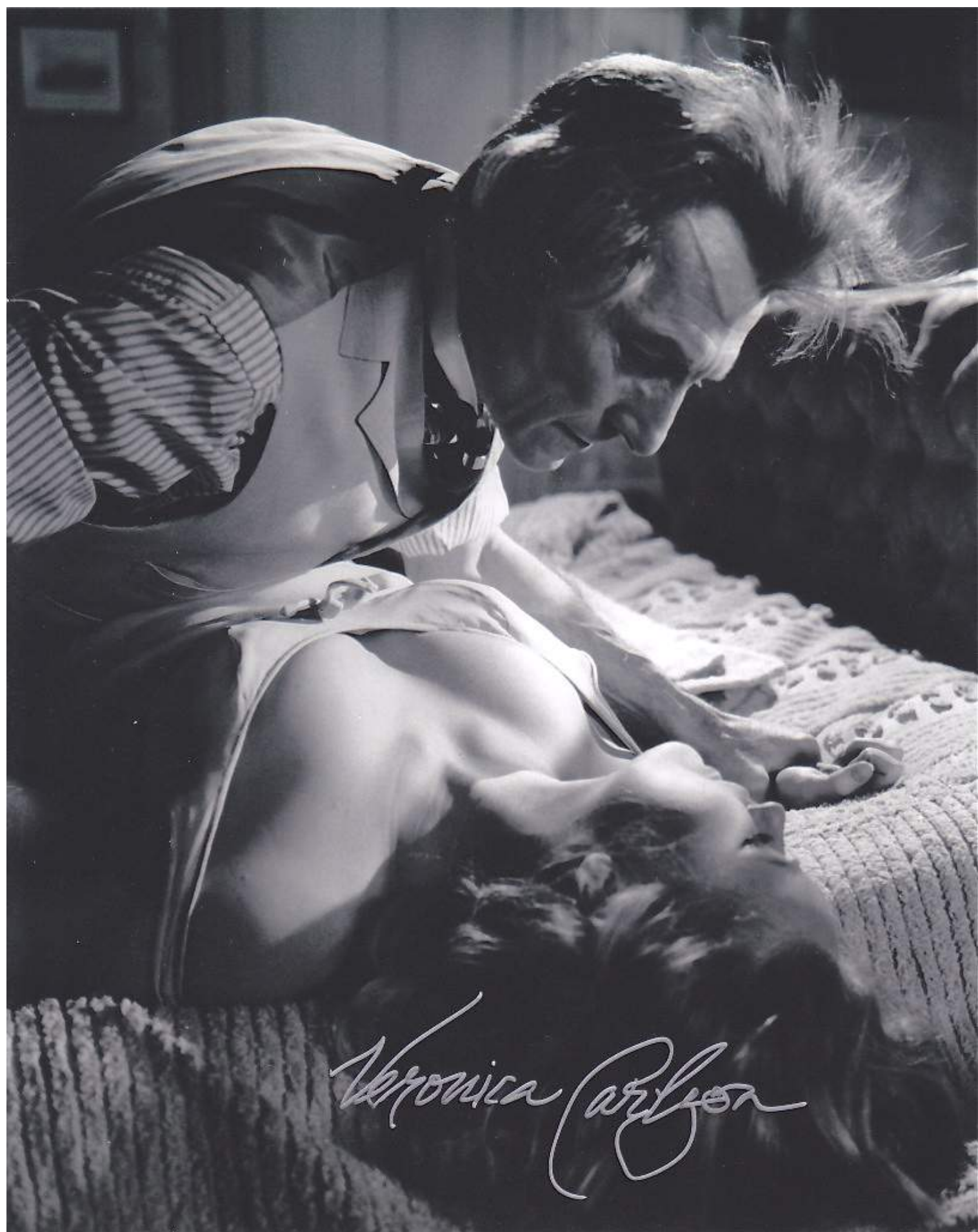
**RICHARD DENNING · MARA CORDAY** CARLOS RIVAS MARIO NAVARRO

Screen Play by DAVID DUNCAN and ROBERT BLEES Story by PAUL YAWITZ

Produced by FRANK MELFORD · JACK DIETZ Directed by EDWARD LUDWIG



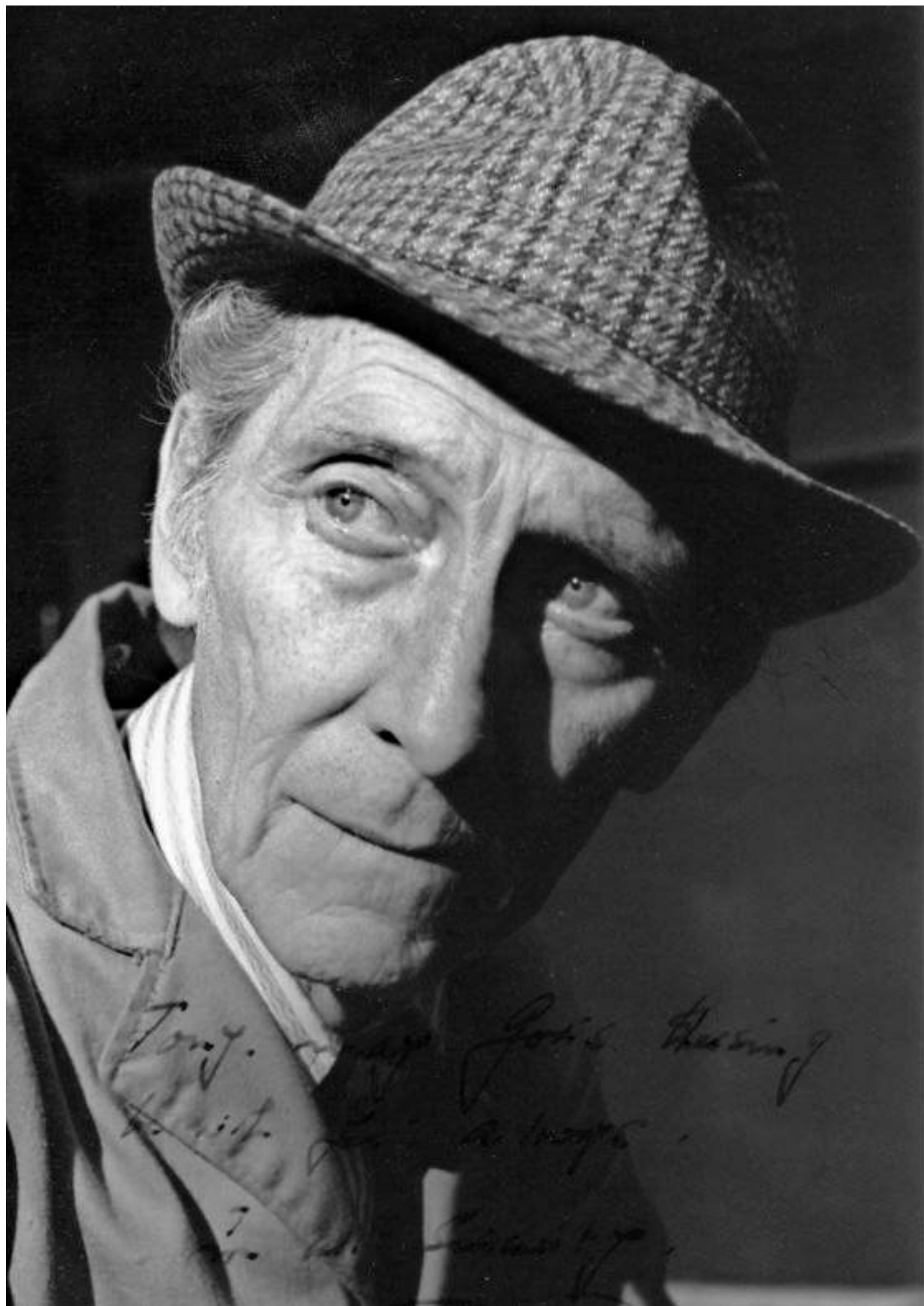






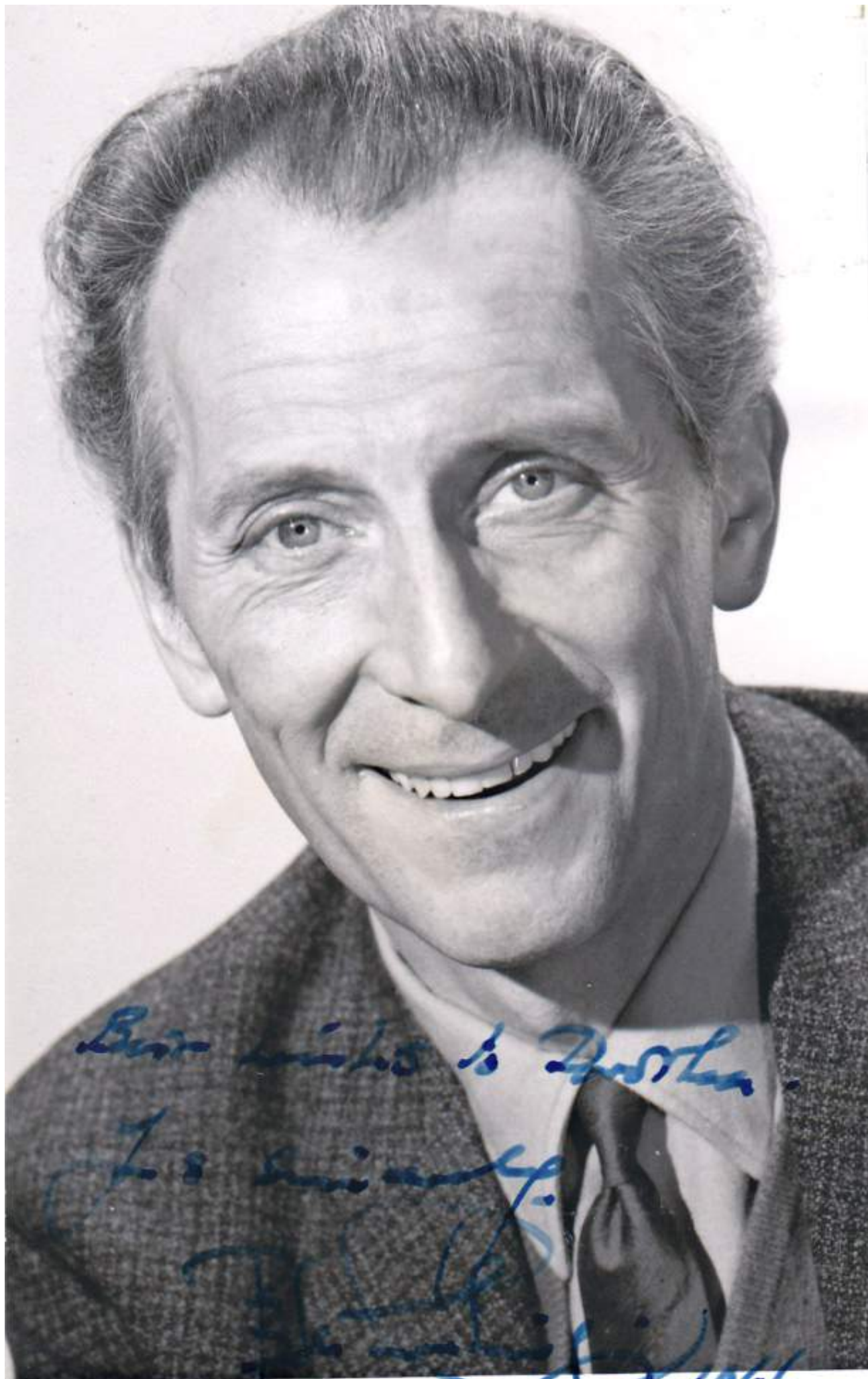






Tommy - says Joe's passing  
has left a big hole.  
I hope to see him again.





Best wishes to Mother

Love sincerely

Frank

Jan. 1966



























To David  
Sincerely,  
Thomas Beck



THOMAS BECK - 20th CENTURY - FOX PLAYER

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HAL PAYTE





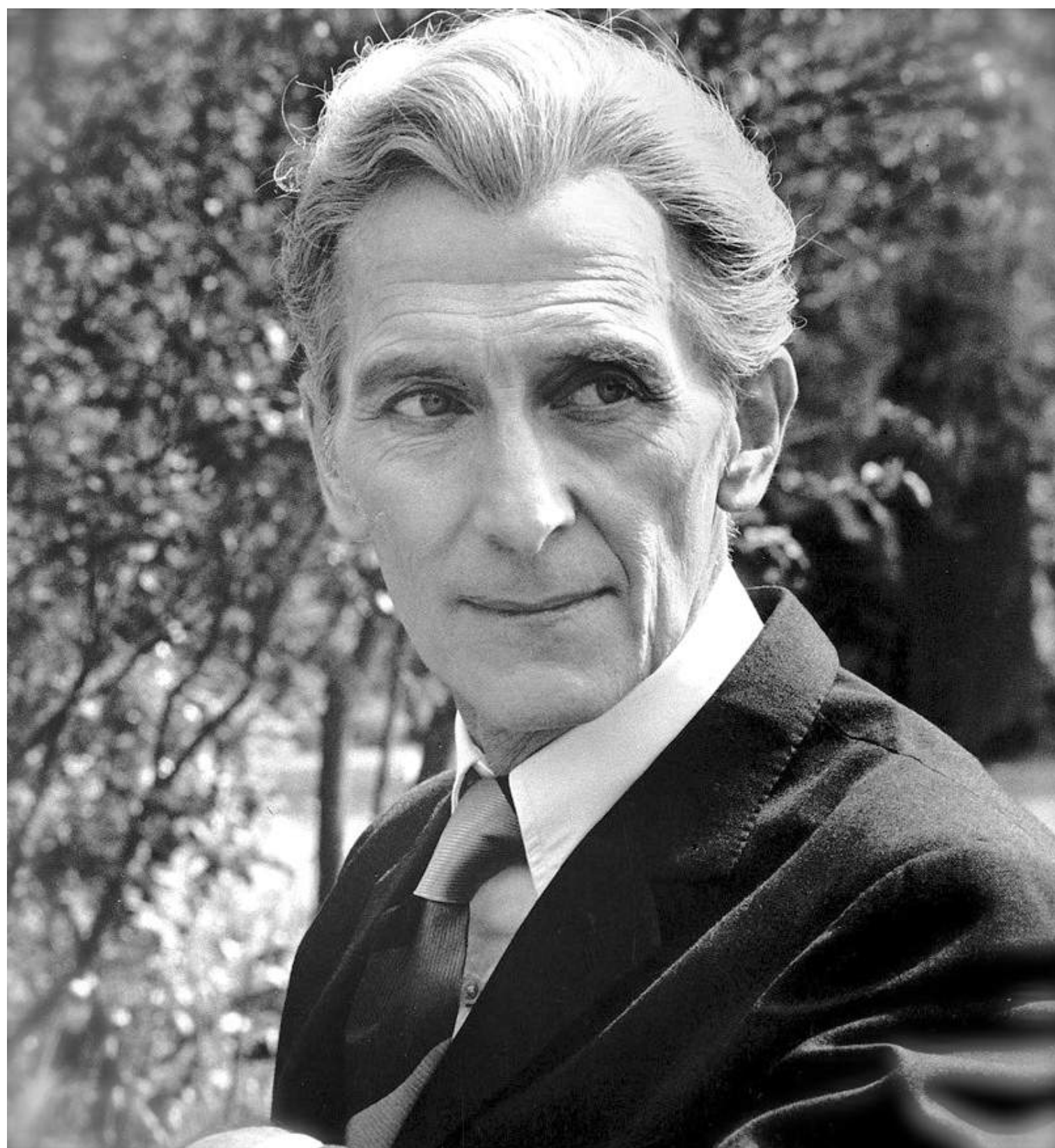
Veronica Carlson  
Christopher Lee

20008-50









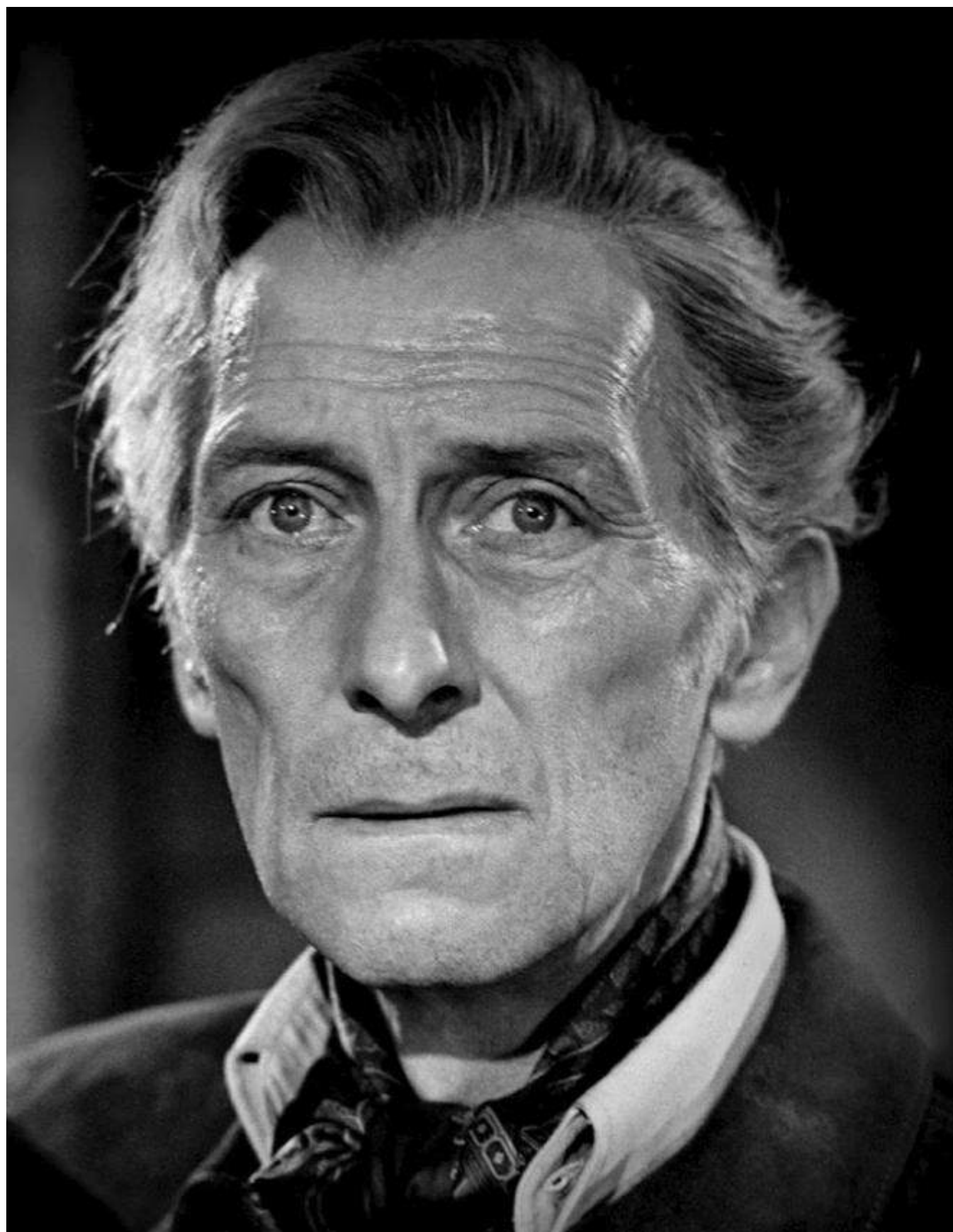
























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HEART BE ALSO

Veronica  
Carlson







